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Kent on Sunday

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EDF ENERGY London and South of England Media Awards

NEWS

[illegible] criminal' probe

Pressure mounts on Ann Barnes following car crash

POLITICS

Who will triumph at the polls in 2015?

We focus on the political battlegrounds

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Bye-bye to the booths

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Will historic day for the crossing deliver dream?

WITH the exception of the view as you come over the bridge from Essex back into Kent - a pleasant vista of winding river, the industry alongside it and, either side, the county stretching to your left and London's Docklands to the right - using the Dartford Crossing is far from a pleasant experience.

It is almost always busy, having to scrape together £2 in cash (or £2.50 as it was rather sneakily raised to this morning), is a pain, and driving through that tunnel is never any fun (although it is luxurious in comparison to the 'breathe in' approach required when driving through the hell-hole that is the Blackwall Tunnel).

But as of today, we are promised, things are going to improve. Granted, the views aren't going to change, but the queues leading up to it should.

And much will ride on this promise being delivered - in part at least.

Because, of course, we funded the Dartford Crossing with the promise that once the motorist had finished paying for it, we'd get to use if for free.

That moment came, and that moment went. And we're still paying for it every time we use it. Only now we get someone from the Highways Agency digitally dipping their hand into our bank accounts and extracting for us.

We have been sold down the river once on this, the thought of free-flowing tolls delivering some magically clear crossing for very long seems something of a long-shot too.

But let us keep our fingers crossed. Let us hope it does work and does suddenly make getting to and from Essex a less stressful experience.

Miracles do sometimes occur.

Have a great weekend.

Editor **Chris Britcher**

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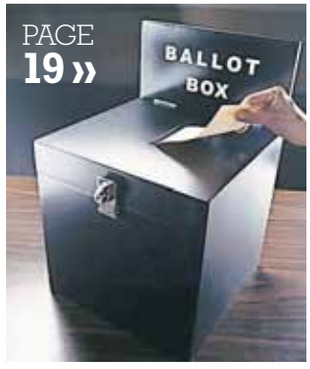

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Barnes faces claim she 'obstructed' police probe

By Jamie Weir
jamie.weir@archant.co.uk

UNDER PRESSURE: Ann Barnes faces another tough test of her position amid the IPCC probe

CONTROVERSIAL Kent Police & Crime Commissioner Ann Barnes is facing claims she "may have committed a criminal offence" following a car crash in Dartford in September.

The probe, being conducted by the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC), is also looking at whether a police constable was "obstructed" from doing their duty when investigating the collision.

The commissioner was left shaken but not hurt following the smash.

Her Mercedes struck another car before crashing into a tree in Princes Road.

The IPCC was called in to investigate amid allegations Mrs Barnes did not have the correct insurance.

A spokesman for the IPCC said: "The IPCC is investigating whether the Police and Crime Commissioner for Kent, Ann Barnes, may have committed a criminal offence by not having in place appropriate insurance to cover business use of her own car when she was involved in a road traffic accident on September 16.

"The investigation will also determine how long the relevant insurance was not in place, if that is the case, and how many miles the PCC travelled on business use while uninsured.

"The IPCC is also investigating whether a police constable was obstructed in the execution of their duty when initial enquiries into the PCC's insurance cover were being made by Kent Police."

When asked to comment on the case, her office declined.

Mrs Barnes has endured another torrid time as the county's first elected PCC.

The most high profile was in the summer when she appeared in a Channel 4 documentary. It caught her unable to explain what she did and bringing her dogs into the office while a vital meeting took place. She was widely criticised for taking part in the show and accused of tarnishing the reputation of the officers she is tasked with overseeing.

Having swept all aside to win the role in 2012, she also made headlines for the wrong reason after failing to check the social media outlets for Paris Brown, her new youth commissioner. Miss Brown, 17, from Sheerness, stood accused on making racist and homophobic comments and was forced to step down just days later.

Fresh blow for hospital A&E after latest report highlights its failings

HEALTH bosses at the Medway Maritime Hospital have insisted steps to improve its accident and emergency (A&E) department are already under way after a damning report this week found it remained riddled with problems.

The report, published by health watchdog the Care Quality Commission (CQC), stated the hospital was failing to protect patients from inappropriate and unsafe care.

Assessment of patients also remained flawed according to the report. In one incident, following the inspection at the end of August, inspectors found one patient had been left waiting at A&E for over 12 hours.

It is the latest blow for the hospital which was put into special measures following an inspection in July 2013.

The report said: "The pace of change remained slow; the ability to introduce change was hindered by the continued lack of leadership within the department.

"However, we were reassured that the trust was in the process of appointing experienced nurses to lead the workforce as well as commissioning external specialists in emergency medicine to help improve the safety of the department."

Dr Phillip Barnes, acting trust chief executive of the Medway NHS Foundation Trust, said: "We realise the challenges before us and are fully committed to providing the high quality of care our patients deserve. Work is taking place across the organisation to ensure we can provide high quality and efficient healthcare in a sustainable way."

The problems even reached the House of Commons after newly-elected Ukip MP for Rochester and Strood, Mark Reckless, raised the issue during Prime Minister's Questions.

David Cameron said: "It will take time to turn round a hospital that did have very high rates of mortality and still has challenges... the NHS is under pressure but the key thing is how we respond to the problems."

Parliament hears of concern over Sheppey Crossing safety

A CAMPAIGN for better safety on the Sheppey Crossing has reached the House of Commons.

Conservative Sittingbourne and Sheppey MP Gordon Henderson raised the issue during a debate over roads.

The crossing was the scene of one of the biggest crashes in UK history when 130 cars collided in thick fog in September 2013.

Earlier this year, a mother and son were also killed. Concerns have been raised over there being no hard shoulder and a lack of lighting.

Mr Henderson told Parliament: ''Something must be done, and it must be done soon.''

Transport minister John Hayes said: ''The Highways Agency has agreed to meet him as soon as is possible to discuss concerns.''

Ukip blunder as it confuses top cathedral with a mosque

THE Thanet South branch of Ukip was left red-faced this week after mistaking Westminster Cathedral in London for a mosque.

The gaffe happened after the BBC's Daily Politics show held an opinion poll on whether Nigel Farage 'has what it takes to be Prime Minister' outside the cathedral.

At that point the Thanet South branch of Ukip tweeted, ''perfect place to hold vote in front of a mosque in London. The BBC's random means selective''.

Martyn Heale, chairman of the Thanet south branch of Ukip, said: ''It was an innocent mistake that is now going around the world it seems. It was made by a long standing member and it's not going to happen again.''

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Banksy mural shipped for sale at Miami art fair

AN ORIGINAL piece of work by street artist Banksy, daubed on to a wall in Folkestone, has been flown to the US to be sold at auction.

The work, entitled Art Buff, appeared overnight on a wall in Payers Park.

It coincided with the launch of the town's popular arts triennial.

Many hoped the mural would remain in the town to continue to attract visitors. But the owners of the wall insisted after repeated vandalism attempts, it was safer for the image to be moved and sold for charity.

It has now been flown to the US where it will be sold at a Miami art fair.

It is expected to fetch around £500,000.

Watchdog critical of how animal campaigners have been treated by police

By Maria Chiorando
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POLICE have been criticised over their handling of animal rights campaigners protesting outside the Port of Ramsgate.

It follows a report by the Independent Police Complaints Commission, which has upheld an appeal from a campaigner over the force's treatment of those who gather to voice their opposition to the export of live animals to the Continent.

They believe the trade is cruel and should be banned.

The complaint by Reg Bell claimed police unfairly imposed a so-called Section 14 order on protestors in order to 'corral' them into a small holding area during a protest in 2012.

Section 14 involves anyone taking part in a protest having to remain in a designated area.

It can only be imposed if a senior police officer believes serious damage to property or other people, or unlawful acts or intimidation could take place as a result of the protestors' activity.

TRANSPORT: Export protests row

The IPCC felt that Kent's former chief constable, Ian Learmonth, who retired from Kent Police in January, did not have grounds to impose the order.

A spokesman said: "The IPCC upheld an appeal... it found the former chief constable arguably lacked a reasonable belief that it was the purpose of the organisers of the protest to intimidate, which is necessary to impose a Section 14 order.

"The IPCC requested the Kent Police and Crime Commissioner raised the issue with a suitable person responsible for public order to ensure that any future restrictions on protests are properly imposed."

Assistant Chief Constable of Kent Police, Jo Shiner, said: "We have continued to engage with protest groups, the ports, and other relevant agencies in our efforts to ensure the facilitation of both the export activity and the right to peacefully protest. The port is incredibly busy, and can be dangerous place.

"The use of the Section 14 order allows people their lawful right to protest without putting themselves or officers in danger."

GOLDEN: Sochi star Lizzy Yarnold

Duo named on prestigious award shortlist

GOLDEN girls Lizzy Yarnold and Charlotte Evans have both been named on the shortlist for the BBC Sports Personality of the Year award.

The shortlist for the prestigious title was unveiled earlier this week.

Miss Yarnold, 26, won gold at the Sochi Winter Olympic Games at the beginning of the year in the skeleton events and was rewarded by an open-top bus tour from Sevenoaks to her home in West Kingsdown.

Meanwhile Miss Evans, 22, from Chatham, was guide skier to the visually impaired Kelly Gallagher, who is also on the list, in the Sochi Paralympics.

They are up against some pretty tough competition, however.

The other nominees are golfer Rory McIlroy, footballer Gareth Bale, gymnast Max Whitlock, newly crowned Formula One world champion Lewis Hamilton, swimmer Adam Peaty, boxer Carl Froch, dressage rider Charlotte Dujardin, and athlete Jo Pavey.

A panel including sports people like Rebecca Adlington, journalists and BBC executives has composed the shortlist The public can vote for their favourite by phone and online on the night.

The winner will be announced on December 14 in a live show.

Paedophile jailed for ten years after sting

A PAEDOPHILE who attempted to hitch from his home in Somerset to sexually abuse an eight-year-old girl, has been sentenced to 10 years in jail.

David Collins, 51, had been exchanging messages with two women where he described how he wanted to carry out sexual acts on their daughter.

What he didn't realise is that he had, in fact, been communicating with undercover police officers.

As he attempted to hike to Maidstone to carry out the abuse in April, he was picked up by police on a slip road on the M4 in Somerset.

Collins was charged with arranging the commission of a child sexual offence and arranging the involvement in pornography of a child under the age of 13.

Following a trial at Maidstone Crown Court he was found guilty of both offences and sentenced to 10 years behind bars.

A six-year sentence for arranging child pornography will run concurrently to his 10-year sentence.

Prison after £50,000 of drugs in freezer

A COUPLE from Sittingbourne who stored almost £50,000 worth of drugs in a fridge-freezer have been jailed.

Daniel Fleming, 30, and Alyx Costa, 23, both formerly of White Hart Mews, Milton Regis, stored a significant quantity of amphetamine and cannabis at their home. It was discovered by police following a raid on June 5.

Fleming pleaded guilty to two counts of possession with intent to supply and was jailed for three years and eight months. Costa admitted one count and was sentenced to three years' imprisonment.

The amphetamine has been valued at £47,000 but the total price could potentially have risen to hundreds of thousands of pounds by the time it reached the street.

Investigating officer Detective Constable Mark Donovan said: ''Despite attempting to distance themselves from the drugs found in their home, it was clear that Daniel Fleming and Alyx Costa were near the very top of the amphetamine supply line.

''I am pleased these drugs have been seized.''

Mother and daughter are attacked on train

A WOMAN and her 18-year-old daughter were verbally abused and then shoved off a train when it arrived at a station – prompting British Transport Police to appeal for information.

The victims had boarded the 6.09pm London Victoria to Dartford train when trouble arose between Kidbrooke and Welling.

When the doors opened at Welling, the couple were pushed out of the doors.

After the case was reported, an investigation got under way.

BTP's PC Jason Weston-Collinson said: ''A 45-year-old woman and her 18-year-old daughter were verbally and physically assaulted and then pushed off the train at Welling station.

''As part of our investigation we are appealing for anyone on the train who witnessed the incident to come forward.''

Anyone with information can contact British Transport Police on 0800 405040, or text 61016. Or call Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

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agenda

What will make next week's headlines…

Dartford Crossing to close for Dart Charge

TRANSPORT chiefs will be studying the impact of dispensing with the toll booths on the Dartford Crossing this week, as the new 'free-flow' system got under way at the weekend.

The scheme is designed to ease congestion and will see drivers paying the new fee of £2.50 remotely after using the crossing or registering for an account.

As part of the switch to Dart Charge, the crossing will closed to southbound traffic between 11.30pm tonight (Sunday) and 5.30am tomorrow morning. Further closures will be also be necessary to clear the booths and prepare new road markings.

On Saturday night the north-bound tunnels were closed. Diversions are being made via the Blackwall Tunnel.

For full details, see page 9.

Drink-drive campaign revs up for festive season

KENT County Council's winter drink driving campaign will get under way this week – with a number of events taking place across the county.

It will combine with the police's crackdown on the roads during the festive season, as officers look to eradicate the threat posed to others by those who insist on driving after drinking.

Events will take place around the county and are happening this week in Ashford, Canterbury and Maidstone.

It is hoped to encourage people to stick to non-alcoholic drinks if they are going to be driving that night or the morning after.

...also

Panto rides onto stage

PANTOMIME season gets under way this weekend - with theatres around the county gearing up for big crowds.

Aladdin at the Marlowe in Canterbury started on Friday with others following over the coming days.

Stones in FA Cup clash

MAIDSTONE United take part in one of the biggest games in their recent history, as they travel to Wales to face Wrexham in the second round of the FA Cup next weekend.

Victory would put the Stones in the hat with Premier League giants in the third round.

Cops to mark property

SHOPPERS in Maidstone can get valuables security marked by Kent Police officers every Tuesday and Thursday in December.

Officers will be in place between 11am and 1pm at the Mall Chequers Centre. Bicycles will also be marked.

Apply for £1m cash pot

COMMUNITY groups and small businesses can this week apply for a share of the Marsh Million.

Open to groups in the Romney Marsh area, it is designed to increase economic prosperity in the rural area.

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All change at Dartford Crossing

It's out with the old – booths and queuing – and in with the new, a pay in advance system, at the infamous bridge and tunnel. **Maria Chiorando** bids farewell to the tolls and looks at what motorists can now expect to see...

THE SAME BUT DIFFERENT: The Dartford Crossing is now booth-free

By Maria Chiorando
Maria.Chiorando@archant.co.uk

IT is estimated to have cost up to £62 million, and, after much anticipation, the new Dartford Crossing payment system – Dart Charge - finally came into force today.

Dart Charge will see the payment booths removed from the crossing, and a new remote payment scheme put in place in order to help ease congestion levels.

Since 6am, drivers have no longer been able to pay using cash at the payment booths.

Work to remove the booths and improve the road layout on the approach to the crossing began on Friday with overnight closures.

Highways Agency project director Nigel Gray said: "The payment booths have been part of the Dartford landscape since 1963 but they contribute to congestion and cause delays.

"That's why they are being removed and we are introducing the new payment system. From November 30, drivers will no longer pay at the booths. Instead they will pay in advance or by midnight the day after crossing, helping to speed up journeys."

The road works will continue until next spring, which is when the full benefits of the new system are expected to be felt.

WHAT PHYSICAL CHANGES ARE BEING MADE TO THE CROSSING?

CONNECT Plus Services, the company that operates the M25, is helping with the building work at the crossing.

Erwan Huerre, its transitions manager, said: "Initially, we'll work to demolish the southbound booths and drivers should see the benefits travelling over the QEII Bridge after the first weekend of work.

"On the northbound side, the works will take longer to complete because we need to construct a new tunnel safety system.

"During this time, road users will still need to travel through the existing barriers, but they won't be able to stop and pay here anymore.

"The reason we need to keep the barriers at this stage is to stop over-sized or non-compliant vehicles from using the tunnel."

Until the work is finished, the Highways Agency have said that drivers can expect some delays but all work is being planned to minimise disruption.

During the building work, temporary speed limits and road layouts will be in use so drivers should follow instructions on road signs.

TRANSITION: It's all change

FACTS ABOUT THE DARTFORD CROSSING PAYMENT BOOTHS

THE booths were first used in 1963, from the opening of the first Dartford Tunnel.

Initially there were 12 booths, with six in either direction. By 1985 this had risen to 12 in each direction.

In 1991, when the QEII Bridge opened, the booth numbers were increased to 14 for northbound traffic and 13 for southbound.

The booths are staffed by around 130 people: a combination of staff who work in the booths, and general staff who move between the booths, responding to incidents and overseeing the automatic toll booths.

Initially payment booth staff wore peaked caps and uniforms.

The booths are a piece of transport history. The Dart Charge team are in discussions with London Transport Museum and Dartford Museum about the possibility of them taking on a booth as an exhibit once they've been removed from the Crossing.

Further information and answers to frequently asked questions can be found at www.gov.uk/highways/dartford and everyone can subscribe to receive updates via this page.

HOW TO PAY FOR THE CROSSING

UNDER Dart Charge, drivers will no longer stop at a barrier to pay the charge.

Instead, a number of cameras will record number plates of all vehicles using the tunnel or bridge.

Motorists will then have until the following day, to pay online, by phone, by post or in one of thousands of Payzone retail outlets. As a general rule, if it is possible to pay the congestion charge in a shop, it will be possible to pay for the Dartford Crossing there too.

Earlier this year, the Highways Agency struck a deal with Payzone, so that drivers can pay in various shops.

Nigel Gray form the agency said: "Making it as easy as possible to pay Dart Charge has been a top priority for us. We recognise that not everyone will want to pay online or by phone. This deal with Payzone will mean drivers will be able to pay at thousands of convenient locations across the country."

Mark Mellor, of Payzone, added: "The Payzone convenience network will make it easy for a consumer to top up their account, or pay Dart Charge in cash, at a local Payzone store throughout the whole of the UK.

"Drivers will be able to pay their Dart Charge at one of thousands of convenient retail outlets across the country with a Payzone terminal."

Drivers can make one-off payments, or set up a pre-pay account if they are regular users - they will receive savings up to one-third on every crossing made.

To make one-off payments, motorists can go online, at www.gov.uk/dart-charge, or they can call 0300 300 0120 from a mobile phone or landline, and pay using a card.

Payments can also be made by post, by writing to PO Box 842, Leeds, LS1 9QF.

For drivers who already have an account with DART-Tag, there's no need to set up a new account – instructions will be sent to account holders to explain how to transfer to Dart Charge.

Motorists who don't have a Dart Charge account will need to pay the charge in advance or by midnight the following day for every crossing made within the charging hours (6am – 10pm) after November 30.

If the toll is not paid by midnight on the day after crossing, a penalty will be issued.

The crossing will be closed between junction 2 (for the A2) and junction 31 (for the A1306), to northbound traffic between 11.30pm on Saturday 29 and 6am in the morning of November 30.

It will then be closed to southbound traffic between 11.30pm on November 30 and 5.30am in the morning of December 1.

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Row over statue to wartime bravery of overseas volunteers

Unveiling in Gravesend marred as argument over who had original idea for overseas volunteers' memorial breaks out, **Chris Murphy** listens to both sides...

THE unveiling of a statue of a Sikh Second World War flying ace has been marred by a row over who was originally behind the idea.

Gravesham District Council's eight-foot-tall statue of Squadron Leader Mahinder Singh Pujji DFC was revealed at St Andrew's Gardens in Gravesend on Friday.

Designed to be a tribute to all those who served from overseas, the image was unveiled by Air Vice-Marshal Edward Stringer CBE and cost £70,000 most of which was raised by the local community and various groups as part of the Mayor's Fund.

Council leader Cllr John Burden said of the statue: "It will look fantastic and I am proud that we have such a beautiful piece in our borough which commemorates brave, heroic people who served Britain."

But a row has now broken out with Palbinder Singh claiming he originally took the idea of the project to the then Gravesham mayor in 2008.

But he told us he is dismayed at the idea being "hijacked" by senior councillors and officials at the Sikh temple, the Gurdwara.

Mr Singh said: "In 2008 I came up with the idea of a statue to recognise and honour the thousands of Sikhs who had died in war for Great Britain.

"I set up a small committee, and originally the plan was that the statue should be of Nand Singh VC.

"I announced The Sikh Statue project in 2008. My team and I then worked on the project conducting site visits, consulting with council planning officers, plus defence personnel and the British Legion."

Two years later, the idea changed slightly, as Mr Singh explained: "After the death of Squadron Leader Pujji in 2010 we decided a statue of him would be more appropriate. In 2011, I was keen to harness the might of the Sikh community to the project - and whilst I am Sikh - I do not attend the Gurdwara and so am short of contacts there. I emailed the then Mayor of Gravesham Tanmanjeet Dhesi, who is the son of the then president of the Gurdwara, and asked for his help.

"When I met him at the Gurdwara he agreed to help organise funding, and that he would 'champion this community project to the Gurdwara committee and leader of the council'."

Mr Singh says he was not asking him to take over the project. He said: "Further, all out of no-where he was telling me that there was already a project underway at the Gurdwara and that we should join forces.

"At my earlier meeting with him there was no such project mentioned, nor did he show me any designs for one, though I did show him our designs for the Pujji statue."

An email from the mayor, Mr Dhesi in late December 2011, also told Mr Singh: "I think it would be ideal to have a launch event within the council chamber/Civic Centre in the near future, so that we can publicise this among the borough's key residents, and further build upon our numbers of those willing to support this much worthwhile initiative."

Mr Singh, a senior police officer, said: "In 2012, the next thing I heard – second hand, from someone else – was that our project was about to be launched in the Woodville Halls to great fanfare by the leader of the council and the mayor. I was not even invited.

"They saw that the project was a fantastic idea and worked to achieve overriding control of the project that we had been working on since 2008.

"I was finally invited to the launch and I was allowed to speak, and I pointed out forcefully that this was my project that they had stolen from me.

"While they did eventually allow only one member of my team to sit on their large committee, we were effectively marginalised."

Mr Singh concluded: "While we are delighted that this has happened, we are appalled at the behaviour of the former Mayor and the council leader who took overriding control of this project and now use it to promote themselves."

Gravesham councillor Mr Dhesi, now also a prospective parliamentary candidate for Labour, has highlighted Mr Singh's involvement with a statement to the Sikh24 website.

He told them: "The concept of a turbaned Sikh soldier statue was conceived by various individuals in varying forms. In due course, the Sri Guru Nanak Darbar Gurdwara Gravesend would have installed such a statue within their complex.

"However, I was contacted by one such individual Palbinder Singh in my capacity as Mayor in 2011, to try and unite the community, council, Gurdwara and other groups to reach a consensus for a statue in the town centre.

"After various discussions with council leader John Burden, Gurdwara president Jaspal Singh Dhesi, senior council/Gurdwara members and other community leaders, it became apparent that consensus could be reached on local war hero Squadron Leader Pujji. The council would help to locate a suitable location and head up the tendering process for finding a sculptor, etc if the funds could be raised from the community.

"Within a month, largely thanks to the Gurdwara committee and wider community leaders, we managed to raise almost £70,000. I'm so proud of our local Gravesham community for coming together so quickly for an initiative which will help to further integrate us all."

Meanwhile council leader John Burden commented: "Pal Singh was on the working group and he had no fight to get on it. He was specifically invited to be on it.

"We even changed dates of some meetings so he could be there.

"He was one of the people who had the idea of a statue, as was the Gurdwara."

He added: "This has been an issue that has been bubbling under the surface for some time and has been mentioned at times, which is why I have been at pains to ensure there is no credit shown on me. I have given credit to Pal Singh and the Gurdwara – it is a community achievement."

CONTROVERSY: Dispute should not mar the bravery being marked

BRAVERY OF MAHINDER SINGH

SQUADRON Leader Mahinder Singh Pujji DFC is one of the 2.5 million servicemen who came from the Indian subcontinent, the largest volunteer army in history.

In 1940, he was one of 18 qualified Indian pilots who volunteered for the Royal Air Force. He had a distinguished career during flying with 43 Squadron and being awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for his bravery.

Born in 1918 in Simla, India, he spent his last few years in Gravesend and died on September 18, 2010 aged 92. He was chairman of the Indian ex-Services Association.

Douglas Jennings, who was chosen to produce the statue, said: ''Pujji was a wonderful subject to research and sculpt given his heroism alongside cultural and RAF influences.

''Pujji is a fabulous representation and example of those who gave up everything to fight for Britain and the Commonwealth. He is a shining example, completely right to represent all those who fought. This man wasn't asked to fight, he chose to.

''Pujji refused to wear the protective head gear because of his religion. He was shot down twice, lost many of his friends and colleagues, but he continued to fight, as did many Sikhs.''

Protect the heart of your town centre by supporting local stores

Small Business Saturday next weekend will be a rallying call for everyone to get behind independent traders on our high streets. As part of our Shop Local! campaign we explain why they need your help

By Jamie Weir
jamie.weir@archant.co.uk

SMALL Business Saturday, like Christmas, comes but once a year, but the message from small, independent retailers, is that they need support all the time if our high streets are to be saved.

The concept of smaller businesses banding together to attract shoppers through their doors, and into town centres, was – like many commercial ideas – one which crossed the pond, arriving in the UK just last year.

Billed as a grassroots, non-political, non-commercial campaign, is aims to highlight small business success and encourages consumers to 'shop local' and support small businesses in their communities.

This year's nationwide national event will be on December 6.

It coincides with Kent on Sunday's campaign in the run-up to Christmas calling on our readers to Shop Local! to help protect the livelihoods of our high street traders.

And where 'Black Friday' marks the start of Christmas shopping for the big, power retailers, Small Business Saturday witnesses the kick off for independent traders across the country.

"We are going to be having a market on in celebration of the event, and to try and encourage people to come down and support their local small business," explains Richard Simm, chairman of the Association of Pantiles Traders in Tunbridge Wells.

He continued: "Small Business Saturday is still in its early days as an event, but it has been really successful in America, and we're hoping it'll really start the beginning of the Christmas shopping season for the traders I represent.

"For us, it's really crucial to remind people that they need to use us, or they will lose us."

That is a sentiment which is being echoed across the county, with the Sevenoaks and District Chamber of Commerce telling KoS it's a big fan of the event as it encourages people to make use of local shops, rather than jumping in their car and heading off to out of town shopping centres or large chain retailers.

Robert Brown, the head of marketing at the chamber said: "Our ethos at the chamber has always been to keep business local and we encourage all of our members to take advantage of Saturday and maximise the opportunities for their business.

"Sevenoaks is thriving with small businesses right now and we have some fantastic boutique shops on our doorstep that are right on trend. A number of local businesses are already highly active on Twitter and we encourage mentions of Small Business Saturday locally using the hashtag to raise your profile."

SUPPORTIVE: Artist Sir Peter Blake has produced this for Small Business Saturday. Courtesy: American Express

And it isn't just retail or business associations getting in on the event, with Dover District Council offering free parking throughout its car parks to try and attract shoppers in to support businesses.

Council leader in Dover, Paul Watkins, told KoS: "We are part of a national scheme supporting small businesses, and were involved in last year's event. We want to support small, independent retailers in their main shopping season, and one of the ways to help was to encourage footfall by offering free parking.

"We are also going to be extending the relief we offer the businesses by offering free parking in the week before Christmas as well."

And other politicians are getting in on the act, with the MP for Tunbridge Wells, Greg Clark, set to attend celebrations of independent traders in the town on the day.

Alison Parmer is the development manager at the Federation of Small Businesses – a campaign group which works to support small businesses in the UK.

She told KoS: "We are absolutely supportive of this as a campaign. We'll be taking part in the day by giving local MPs guided tours of independent businesses in Maidstone and in Tunbridge Wells. There will also be a free small business workshop in Faversham for small business owners to go and get advice on how to grow and make their businesses better.

"It's a great event, and something which really marks the build up to Christmas for many of the small retailers in the county. It's the first Saturday in December, with shoppers gearing up for Christmas, and is perfect for just reminding people what makes our high streets that little bit special. That is exactly the kind of promotion we need for small businesses across Kent.

Add Richard Simm from the Pantiles: "It has been really hard for many traders in our area over the past few years. We have seen a few go under, which is obviously sad, but we have been constantly working to try and ensure that people are attracted to come and shop here. We've put on loads of events to try and draw crowds in, which has worked on some levels.

"However, even now what the traders I represent are telling me, is that people's spending power seems to be down. We are witnessing a decent level of footfall, with lots of people coming here, but that isn't necessarily converting into the number of sales we need."

And that, according to Mrs Parmar, is why the day is so important – to help introduce people to other businesses they may not otherwise have been aware of.

> **"People's spending power seems to be down. We get a decent level of footfall, but that isn't converting into the number of sales we need"**
>
> **Richard Simm,**
> Association of Pantiles Traders

She said: "The great thing about Small Business Saturday is that it encourages people to go out and explore some of the businesses they may not otherwise ever go into.

"It really highlights the range, craftsmanship and talent of small businesses across Kent. It helps introduce people to businesses they may just have walked straight past, and shows them the level of quality they can get from some of the businesses which are out there, rather than simply going to the big retailers to buy something generic and mass produced."

One of the event's grassroots supporters is banking giant American Express. As part of the celebrations, it commissioned award winning pop artist, Sir Peter Blake - best known for creating the Beatles' legendary Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band cover - to create a piece of art to promote the event. He chose to use one of Kent's businesses in the work – Flawless jewellery, in Westerham.

No stranger to Kent, he was born in Dartford and attended college in Gravesend. He explained: "The notion of a 'Nation of Shopkeepers' is embedded in our folklore and the wonderful variety of today's independent shops as well as the character that small businesses bring to a local area make them an ideal subject matter for modern pop art. Having worked at a local butcher at the age of 13 I have also experienced the dedication and hard work that goes into running a small shop. I am thrilled to be lending my support to a campaign that champions small businesses."

CAMPAIGN: WHY WE'RE URGING YOU TO SHOP LOCAL! THIS CHRISTMAS

AS the rush to the shops begins in earnest ahead of the festive season, we are calling on our readers to not spend all their hard-earned cash online this year.

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So Shop Local! is calling on you to remember that failure to visit and spend in your local stores may well mean they're not here this time next year. It really is a case of 'use them, or lose them'.

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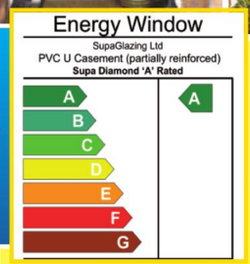

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KCC comes out against airport expansion as noise levels rise

With more and more homes in west Kent 'blighted' by flights to and from Gatwick Airport, Kent County Council has changed its position on a second runway at the airport and is calling for changes to current flight paths to cut the levels of noise, as **Jamie Weir** reports...

KENT County Council has changed its mind and is now opposing plans a second runway at Gatwick Airport.

The revelation came after a report was published which highlighted the plight of residents in the west of the county who have seen an increase in noise to 'unacceptable levels' as the number of flights has grown.

The council says that it is also pressing for measures to be put in place to ensure that Gatwick Airport protects residents from what it calls 'intolerable' noise by ensuring there are periods when no flights travel overhead.

The council had previously supported the development of a second runway at Gatwick, stating in its policy document Bold Steps for Aviation – which was published in May, 2012 – that the airport was its preferred option for expansion.

However, changes in flight paths, which have only recently begun, have pushed the council to reconsider its position.

KCC leader Paul Carter says residents are having their lives blighted by the constant noise which has risen to unacceptable levels.

Cllr Carter said: "The noise impacts on west Kent from Gatwick's current single runway configuration are already unacceptable and a potential doubling of these impacts with a second runway would be intolerable.

"In line with the EU Single European Sky initiatives [an initiative which ensures that design, management and regulation of airspace is coordinated throughout the European Union], the National Air Traffic (NATS) control service has started to implement changes in flight paths, which has brought to our attention two things – a concentration of flight paths over west Kent; and that the number of night flights at Gatwick during the summer period is three and half times those coming in and out of Heathrow, which is a massive issue.

"This change in flight paths has been intolerable for a significant number of residents in that area and brought us to the conclusion that if they are going to pursue this policy in line with the EU Single European Sky initiatives, expansion of this airport and expansion of night flights must not happen."

Campaigners have stepped up their fight against the proposals for a second runway at Gatwick since the Aviation Commission – chaired by Sir Howard Davies – stated that the airport was being considered as an option for increased aviation runway capacity in the south east.

One of the parish councils which joined the fight against expansion at Gatwick is Chiddingstone. Its chairman, Richard Streatfeild, says that issues from the airport have got worse for residents in the area recently.

He said: "Our parish council is a member of the High Weald Councils' Aviation Action Group. The group represents thousands of disaffected residents, unhappy with this proposed expansion. We understand that aviation expansion will happen in the future, but Gatwick have gone too far this time.

"The new flight paths are abysmal and have made things so much worse for so many more people. Chiddingstone, Penshurst, and many, many other areas are now blighted by almost constant noise. And it isn't simply the flight paths, but the fact that Gatwick has changed the way it uses airspace. They are concentrating so many planes into small areas that it has become unbearable for many."

Brendan Sewell is the chairman of the Gatwick Area Conservation Campaign which is fighting against the expansion of the airport.

He told KoS that the new flight paths were destroying new large swathes of west Kent.

He said: "These new flight paths that Gatwick has introduced have caused a great deal of anger and outrage over the past few months. The airport decided to introduce new concentrated flight paths which have led to large numbers of planes flying the same route.

"A gliding path has also been introduced, which means that planes fly in over a straighter route, regardless of population centres. This has meant that some areas of west Kent, such as Penshurst, are being affected a great deal more."

And KCC says that complaints from residents affected by noise has also increased as flights over parts of west Kent have risen sharply, from between 10 and 20 flights per day to a maximum of 150 as the new flight paths have been introduced.

Cllr Carter said: "It is quite clear that residents in west Kent are already suffering from significant levels of disturbance as a result of increased air traffic over the last few years and the recent changes in flight paths.

"We want Gatwick to provide respite for

BLIGHT: The lives of people in west Kent under the flight path of aircraft flying in and out of Gatwick have been blighted by 'intolerable' noise levels. KCC is now calling for 'no flight' periods

these residents by varying flight paths – and have met with the airport's chief executive to discuss this.

"We want Gatwick and the NATS air traffic control service to re-design the airspace to include the use of multiple arrival and departure routes, to provide predictable, rotating respite, and spread the burden of over-flight more equitably between communities."

The noise isn't simply limited to day time flights either. Gatwick has one of the least restrictive night time air transport movement limits. These are enforced between 11.20pm and 6am every night. The levels which had been set by government saw Gatwick allowed 3,250 flights over-night during winter, and 11,200 in summer. In comparison, Heathrow has far fewer flights allowed – just 2,550 in winter, and 3,250 in summer.

Cllr Carter said: "The current number of permitted night flights is simply unacceptable and has resulted in a massive increase in the number of complaints from residents whose quality of life has been disrupted.

"We want the Department for Transport to reduce the night movement limit at Gatwick to at least a level that is comparable with Heathrow."

That acceptance is something that Mr Streatfeild is happy about. He told KoS he was glad the council had accepted the impact night flights had on residents.

He said: "The affect of sleep deprivation is truly serious for people. There are residents out there who are being woken six or more times a night, and it really is disturbing. This is exacerbated because it isn't a busy urban area. Because its quite quiet, other than the flights, the noise from planes makes much more difference.

"The huge number of flights people are having to put up with is actually making people ill."

And according to Mr Sewell, the problem isn't simply restricted to noise – he says it has a serious economic impact as well.

He said: "One of the biggest problems with these new flight paths is that people are subjected to not only being blighted by noise and disturbances shattering the tranquillity, but also by a blow to house prices.

"Many people will have spent large sums of money buying a nice house in the countryside for peace and quiet, and these new flightpaths will knock literally thousands off the price they can get back.

"That's outrageous for these homeowners. They end up in a situation

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CHIDDINGSTONE: Chairman Richard Streatfeild

AGAINST: KCC leader Paul Carter

where they can't enjoy the house because their peace has been shattered, but also feel trapped, because no-one wants to buy the house. There is no escape for these people."

But that isn't the only economic impact that the area may face according to Mr Streatfeild. He says that a whole industry could be in danger if Gatwick's second runway development were supported.

He said: "One of the things which the High Weald is known for is its natural beauty. We have a tremendous amount of tourists who come here specifically for that – around 2 million each year. They aren't going to want to come if we have noisy flights overhead every minute of every day. There are 560 aircraft movements a day; that destroys the peace, quiet and natural surroundings.

"Businesses that rely on tourism are also under threat. Hever Castle, Penshurst Place and other attractions are all saying that they may have to shut their doors if a new runway is allowed. That would mean the loss of jobs, and historic attractions."

A spokesperson for Gatwick Airport said: "We will continue to work closely with Kent County Council to illustrate that Gatwick is doing as much as possible to reduce the impact of aircraft noise on local residents, including detailed work exploring whether 'rotating respite' can be provided to communities most affected.

"We will also continue to make the case that Gatwick would bring a significant boost for the local economy, including thousands of jobs, apprenticeships and opportunities for businesses."

The Aviation Commission declined to comment on the announcement from KCC with a spokesman telling KoS it was highly unlikely it would issue a statement on the subject.

EXPANSION?: Gatwick Airport wants a second runway

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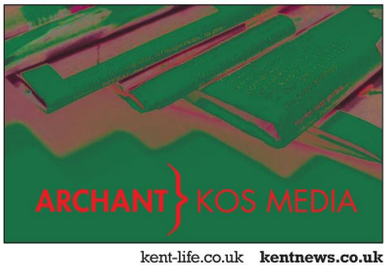

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Looking ahead to our key seats at 2015 election

Ahead of May 8, KoS highlights the six seats the parties will be fighting over...

Maria Chiorando
Maria.Chiorando@archant.co.uk

EVEN the most confident and competent of gamblers would struggle to place a bet on the outcome of next year's general election.

Just three months ago, no one could have predicted that Nigel Farage's Ukip could have made such in-roads – let alone doubling its MP count by over-turning a huge Tory majority in Medway.

The rise of Ukip, and its potential to split Right-leaning voters – and now, it appears, appeal to a disillusioned Left too – has been just one aspect of a rapidly-changing political landscape, which has seen the Liberal Democrats start to flatline, and the Labour's vote collapse under the rudderless leadership of Ed Miliband.

Ukip will not be forming the next government, but it could yet hold the balance of power, as the nation appears perhaps destined for yet another coalition.

The morning of May 8, the day after polling day, is likely to spark the most fascinating of cross-party discussions.

But what of Kent? Following Mark Reckless' win in Rochester & Strood, we identify six of the key seats and how they could pan out.

■ **What do you think? Enter the debate. Share your views. Write to: The Editor, KoS, Apple Barn, Hythe Road, Smeeth, Ashford TN25 6SS. Or email editorial@kosmedia.co.uk.**

SITTINGBOURNE & SHEPPEY

Current MP: Gordon Henderson (Conservative)
Majority: 12,383

BACK in August, a leaked Ukip memo revealed its apparent 'top 12' target seats. Sittingbourne and Sheppey was one of them.

And there has certainly been lots of whispers over the months that Gordon Henderson, who holds a comfortable Tory majority in the seat, is a candidate for possible Ukip defection.

He's denied it, however – although admitted he had been approached – and since then it has all gone rather quiet.

He told KoS: "The simple answer to whether I will be defecting is no.

"I have made it very clear on a number of occasions that I believe in Conservative principles and I will always be a Conservative. I have been approached by Ukip, but I politely declined.

"It does seem perverse that if they think I am good enough to invite to their side, that they would try and target my seat."

Of course, if a week is a long time in politics, the three months since the 'top 12' list leaked is a lifetime.

Ukip has made great strides since and may have shifted its focus. But with a strong showing in the local elections last year, Ukip will be there or thereabouts on polling day.

Which will be another major blow for Labour.

This seat is traditionally a bellweather for the nation's political mood.

THE MAN IS NOT FOR TURNING: Tory Gordon Henderson

Derek Wyatt won it in 1997 when Tony Blair swept in... and lost it in 2010 to Mr Henderson.

Labour's performance here will be fascinating to observe.

Pundit Iain Dale said: "This seat in similar to Gillingham, insofar as it's a seat that Labour need to hold power, but how can they turn a majority of that size?

"I can't see that majority being overturned."

VERDICT: The Tories will hold onto this one.

ROCHESTER AND STROOD

Current MP: Mark Reckless (Ukip)
Majority: 2,920

UNLESS you had your head in a bucket this month, you'll not have missed Ukip laying claiming to its first Kent MP.

The decision by Mark Reckless to turn his back on David Cameron and run into the welcoming arms of Nigel Farage left the Government flat-footed.

By the time it had got its act together, the Ukip bandwagon had long since rolled into town and made merry.

But while Mr Farage was quick to point to the triumph – and there is no denying it was a remarkable win – the size of the victory was not as sizeable as perhaps the pundits expected.

From a near 10,000 majority for Mr Reckless wearing blue in 2010, it became a majority of 3,000 after he'd pulled on his nice new purple jumper.

A huge swing, no doubt about it, but not enough to make the Tories give up hope of reclaiming it next May.

The Conservative candidate Kelly Tolhurst has vowed to return in 2015 to win back the seat – possibly with some of the polish that critics claimed she lacked this year.

Once upon a time – just a mere few months ago – Labour would have entertained the idea of Ukip and the Tories splitting the Right-leaning vote, allowing them to slip up the inside.

However good the Labour candidate was though – and Naushabau Khan certainly impressed many commentators – Ed Miliband's party saw Ukip pinch a decent share of its voters too.

Iain Dale, who lives in Pembury, is a political commentator and presenter for LBC radio.

He told KoS: "I think it's very difficult to call that one because I don't think Mark Reckless won by as much as people thought, and it's difficult to tell where his vote came from.

"The Conservatives had a 10,000 majority before, and that will give them heart for the fight."

What remains to be seen is whether the mood of the electorate remains the same next year – a by-election is a different animal to a general election, and Ukip could well lose many of the protest votes they hoovered-up from disaffected Conservative, Labour and Lib Dem voters.

WILL HE WIN NEXT TIME?: UKIP candidate Mark Reckless and his wife Catriona arrive at the polling station at the Baptist Institute Hall

VERDICT: Almost impossible to call... but the Conservatives might just win it back.

DOVER

Current MP: Charlie Elphicke (Conservative)
Majority: 5,274

DOVER MP Charlie Elphicke had the smallest majority of any in the county at the 2010 election, defeating incumbent Gwyn Prosser and leaving Labour without representation in the county.

Again, the area is traditionally a solid barometer for national feeling, and it is true that every general election victory since 1979 corresponds to who holds Dover.

Labour knows it must perform here, but with the port on its doorstep, the issue of immigration is almost certain to dominate. Which will, once again, mean Ukip will no doubt look to secure some points too.

Political commentator Iain Dale says: "Like Gillingham, Dover swings with the political winds – if Labour or Conservative win nationally, they will win in Dover.

"Charlie Elphicke has a high profile – he has portrayed himself as a really local MP, and that will help him.

"Labour's Gwyn Prosser won't be standing – and he would have been a bigger fight than candidate Clair Hawkins, as it's always hard to take over from a candidate who was as respected as Mr Prosser.

"Charlie Elphicke is popular across parties, and well-respected.

"Dover can always surprise you. I would predict that Mr Elphicke will hold it."

FIGHT ON HIS HANDS: Charlie Elphicke MP for Dover and Deal

VERDICT: Conservatives to cling onto this one.

Turn to Page 20

GILLINGHAM AND RAINHAM

Current MP: Rehman Chishti (Conservative)
Majority: 8,680

THIS seat will see a battle that makes the political personal, when Conservative Rehman Chishti takes on his former mentor and Labour candidate Paul Clark in a clash that will be the most hotly-contested seat in Medway.

Polictical commentator Ian Dale explains: "If Labour are to win the election, they have to win seats in places like Gillingham. This is one of those seats that swings with the political winds.

"Paul Clark has a high media profile, and has been well-regarded, but Rehman Chisti has done a lot locally – this will be close."

Mr Chishti, who the Telegraph once described as a 'rising star' of the Conservative Party actually started his political career in the Labour camp. A former colleague of Mr Clark, and a Labour councillor for Gillingham North, he stood for the Labour Party at the 2005 general election for Horsham, but lost to Francis Maude.

Mr Maude, Mr Chishti claims, was instrumental in his decision to look towards David Cameron's rising Tory party.

He defected to the Conservatives later that year.

Having helped Mr Clark in 2005, by 2010 he stood against him. And as the wave of public opinion swung away from Labour, so he was returned as MP.

CONTEST: Paul Clark

Now, in a mouthwatering return bout, the two go toe-to-toe in round two. Few would expect Ukip to figure here.

Paul Clark told KoS: "There is some history, but ultimately he is a Tory, he is my opponent.

"At the time of his defection, he said he had seen the light, and thought that Tony Blair was wrong, when weeks before that he had been supporting him.

"Generally with people who jump ship, there's an indication that they are going to do so – there are these cases where people swap and you're not surprised."

Mr Dale adds: "Mr Chishti had a large majority, which is going to take some turning over – I would have thought it would be a Conservative victory, but Ukip could dig into the Conservative vote, so it could go to Paul Clark."

VERDICT: Labour could just claw it back.

THANET SOUTH

Current MP: Laura Sandys (Conservative)
Majority: 7,617

THANET SOUTH will surely be one of the most watched seats in the country, as Nigel Farage looks to secure his very own seat in the corridors of power at Westminster.

No stranger to the seat – he competed for it and lost in 2005 – Ukip performed well in the local elections last year and few would bet against Mr Farage emerging triumphant.

With incumbent Laura Sandys already confirming she is stepping down in 2015, the disillusioned Tory voter does not even have familiarity to fall back on.

Craig Mackinlay – a former Ukip man himself – has been drafted in to fight the blue corner, but its difficult to see how he, or indeed anyone, can hope to stop Mr Farage sweeping all aside.

"If Nigel Farage doesn't win this," says political pundit Iain Dale, "it will be the end of his political career. He said he would step down if Ukip didn't get any MPs, and now they have Douglas Carswell and Mark Reckless.

"I think it would be a huge psychological blow to him if he doesn't win it."

Mr Farage told KoS: "Is the seat mine to lose? You tell me. I think we have excellent prospects across Kent, we can be winners in Kent, we showed that in Rochester."

Would defeat deliver a fatal blow to his political career?

"That's for you to speculate," he said, "but I will say that this is the most open general election I've ever seen in my life time."

Adds Iain Dale: "If Laura Sandys was standing, she would make it tough. The Conservative candidate, Craig MacKinlay is untested, although he did stand against Ann Barnes in the election for the police and crime commissioner."

When Mr Farage was selected to represent the party in Thanet South he said he believed Ukip 'may win enough seats to hold the balance of power'.

STANDING DOWN: Laura Sandys is set to leave

Once again, Labour have been left wondering just why the debate is between blue and purple. Especially as this was once their seat. Stephen Ladyman swept in as Tony Blair led Labour to victory in 1997, before Mrs Sandys reclaimed it for 2010.

Were Labour to win this seat, and few doubt Will Scobie is a strong, local, candidate, it would be even more surprising than if Mr Farage lost it.

VERDICT: Unless there's a tidal wave scale revolt, Nigel Farage for Ukip will win it.

Turn to Page 21

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SHEPWAY

Current MP: Damian Collins (Conservative)
Majority: 10,122

SHEPWAY has been a Tory-stronghold since 1950, when the constituency of Folkstone and Hythe was created, but opposition is creeping in, as support for Ukip rises in the area.

They performed strongly at last year's county elections, suggesting a swell of support for the party, who won four out of the six seats in the Shepway district.

The other two council seats are held by the Conservatives and Green Party.

In addition to this, Janice Atkinson, one of four Euro MPs for the south east, has been selected to stand for Ukip.

She is no polished performer, however, having already made a high profile gaff by being filmed telling anti-racism campaigners to "f***-off" while out campaigning in Ashford town centre.

Political pundit Ian Dale feels she poses little threat. He explains: "Janice Atkinson is a ludicrous proposition.

"She's an inappropriate choice because people won't like her there – she is not the type who will go down well in that area.

"She should have gone for one of the Medway seats."

It seems unlikely to see past it being another Ukip versus Tory race for the line.

What will be of most interest will be how the Liberal Democrat vote holds up here. Candidate Lynne Beaumont is an active and high-profile figure in Shepway and came second in 2010, taking more than 30 per cent of the vote, compared with Damian Collins' winning 49.4 per cent.

STRONG POSITION: MP for Folkestone and Hythe Damian Collins

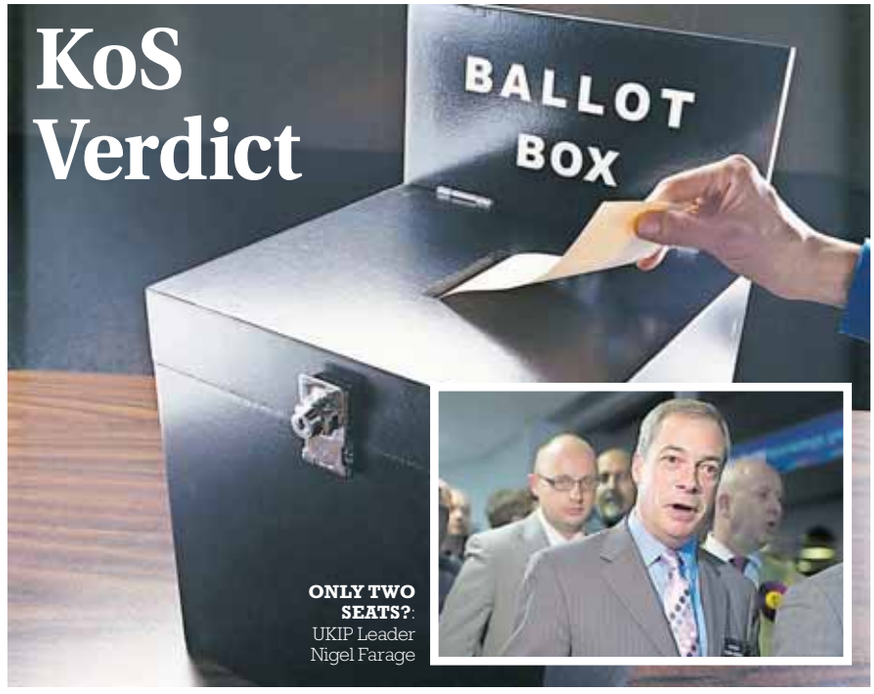
With their vote being annihilated everywhere, it will be interesting to see how it is affected.

Adds Mr Dale: "The Lib Dems always think they have a good chance at this seat, but they have never really had a sniff at it.

"Damian Collins has been a really good politician, and people like him – there's no way it won't stay Conservative – this is the closest one to a dead cert."

VERDICT: The Tories to win comfortably.

KoS Verdict



ONLY TWO SEATS?: UKIP Leader Nigel Farage

IN a county traditionally so true blue, it is hard to imagine the colour changing dramatically. But with Ukip's rise comes remarkable fragility to the political landscape in this county.

Ukip's ability to apparently convince huge swathes of voters that immigration is the number one issue, and that the EU lies at the heart of that issue, is forcing all political parties into a narrow argument.

The reality, of course, is that the issues impacting on Kent – and the nation for that matter – are far more complex, and far broader.

It now seems inevitable that Ukip will make some gains in Kent.

But it still seems hard to think it will emerge with more than two seats – and one of those will only be carried by Nigel Farage's remarkable strength of personality.

Labour, on the other hand, must surely be facing a humbling.

It has made none of the gains it would have hoped to have done, and its message has evaporated under Ed Miliband.

As for the Liberal Democrats? Well, it would perhaps be the biggest political shock of all time if it somehow managed to win anywhere. In fact, coming second anywhere may well be considered a major triumph.

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Will we finally get to enjoy a white Christmas this winter?

Probably not, but amateur weatherman expects February to be the coldest yet

By Chris Murphy
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

AS THE focus turns towards the festive season, dreams once again turn to there being a white Christmas – especially after last year's was a case of torrential rains and floods.

But it seems once again we will be left disappointed – at least that's according to one of the county's leading amateur weatherman – the aptly named Dave the Weather.

According to his unconventional methods, the best snow fans can hope for this year will be a little frost.

But he does say February could prove to be one of the coldest yet – with plenty of snow and ice.

The amateur weatherman from Edenbridge has once more been reading the vital signs offered up by nature to predict what the winter season holds for us.

He does this all year round, and said his "previous prediction was pretty well up to scratch, August reasonable, September very dry and October wetter than anticipated, but October is a fickle month in any year".

Dave King uses ancient sayings, or saws, that he matches up with what he sees, to make his predictions. And he claims an impressive success rate.

He explains: "In October, one expects leaf-fall, or at least the change of colour from green to reds, browns and autumnal colours, yet in late October the trees still had leaves and they are for the greater part still green.

"The retention of these leaves gives rise to some interesting sayings in October and November concerning the winter weather; and, since I only use tried, tested, proven and reliable sayings, these needed to be heeded for they will answer the question 'will we have snow this winter?'.

"There's been precious few acorns and ash seeds this year, but a massive store of everything else, be it hips, haws, seeds, berries or fruits. There is a massive larder out there for birds and animals plus the wine-making humans too, for a wonderful crop of sloes this year. There were virtually no frosts to speak of in October which normally means November will be a lot frostier.

LOOKING AHEAD: Dave King aka Dave the Weather

"The wind direction on September 29 was a little confusing for many, in that it was near dead calm. However at this location it was south to south-easterly and this is the direction that will predominate here for the next few months, which would indicate colder, dryer weather than those are further west that experienced a SW wind on the 29th.

"For those in 'dead calm' the following days were south to south-easterly, especially up the east coast of the UK and I suggest that that is the direction for the coming few months."

His unusual methods may not convince the masses, but he insists nature's signs are fail-safe methods of predicting what the weather will be like for months to come.

He adds: "I often get adverse comment that my predictions are not in line with what others normally expect in the south east. I have been doing this, and using the same methodology – always being improved too – for many years now, and here in the south east we are liable to the influence of the near Continent more than the rest of the UK.

"The higher, on the whole, and dryer conditions in this corner of the UK are quite noticeable on any daily weather chart.

"Conversely too, when the winter takes hold and the easterly winds start to blow off the same European mainland it can also be colder too than one might expect. I write what the methodology provides, I do not write to be controversial, if the data is inconclusive, which is rare, then I say so.

"So the wind on September 29 indicates that the wetter milder weather of last winter will not re-appear. It will be colder and dryer than last winter – and yes we will definitely see frost and snow this coming winter too."

He added: "Immediately by looking

FROSTY: We're unlikely to see snow until February but if could get frosty

at the moon phases the word 'frost' sticks out; fair and frosty in my terminology is dry, sunny, calm days but with cold dry calm frosty nights."

He added December can be a very stormy month, especially just after Christmas.

He said: "The sayings of this month are really accurate and will give an excellent foretaste of the year to come.

"Will it snow at Christmas? On the easterly coastline I think not, I think a dry cold sunny, frosty conditions will prevail – which of course gives good fruit and grain harvest the following harvest – but snow, though cold, is unlikely.

"There is so much advance data in the methodology already that backs up this prediction. A cold dry frosty month is what I predict."

And what of the new year? He added: "Whereas December 2014 had frost as the influence for the month, January shows rain, but it is also a stormy month. I add a caveat here, the wind will be easterly, and this could, if cold enough, give rise to snow falling instead of rain. Should that be the case, then with stormy windy conditions, snow will drift and cause some travel problems.

"This January will be determined by the coldness and strength of the cold from the east off the near Continent and while the only real 'snow moon,' per se, is towards the back of the month, do not be surprised if snow arrives earlier."

Once more using nature's habits he said: "On October 7, locally, six varieties of duck arrived from northern climes to spend the winter here; the following day four different types of geese also arrived from the same regions.

"For these to arrive so early indicated some really cold weather to come, and, nature being what it is, the cold arrived two days later from where they originated – the first really heavy snowfall of the year – which co-incidentally arrived on the first 'snow moon' of the year. Nature is never wrong."

Mr King said a hot June predicts an appalling February. He added: "Maybe now it becomes clearer why the migrating birds, ducks and geese arrive early, why there are so many seeds, hips, haws, berries and fruits on the hedgerows; why the sheep have such thick coats, why the English onions have such thick skins, why there so many dead nettles in the roadsides.

"Another thought to ponder; remember back to 1990, a beautiful hot, dry summer, not dissimilar to the summer just past, and this was followed by the winter of 1990/1 – one of the coldest Februarys ever recorded at 1.9C as the average monthly temperature.

"February is always a cold month – this 2015 February may well be extremely cold – nature has prepared well – we must not ignore all these signs. It could the coldest for many years."

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SUITABLE FOR HOMES?: A large brownfield site on the A2 between Faversham and Sittingbourne
Picture: VICKY ELLIS

There's enough brownfield land for 70,000 new homes claim

A countryside campaign group claims 70,000 new homes could be built in the county on already developed land thus helping to save existing greenfield sites from development. But, as **Jamie Weir** reports, the figures may not give the whole story...

KENT has enough previously developed land for at least 70,000 new homes, according to a report from countryside campaign group, the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE).

The report, which is titled From Wasted Space to Living Spaces, claims to have identified brownfield – previously developed – land for the houses.

The stock of brownfield land in Kent totals around 1,600 hectares according to the campaign group – this, argues the charity, should mean that development on undeveloped, or greenfield, land becomes unnecessary.

The charity says that much of the land available for development is in the north of the county. Dartford has 846 hectares of brownfield land sitting vacant, while the Medway Towns, says the charity, have a total of 713 hectares.

And other areas of Kent also have large tracts of previously developed brownfield, with Dover stocking almost 300 hectares of the land, and Tonbridge and Malling sitting on 336 hectares.

With average housing densities in the UK sitting at around 23 homes on each hectare, Dartford alone could potentially accommodate almost 20,000 new houses without building on un-spoilt countryside.

One of the biggest bonuses of ensuring brownfield land is developed first, say CPRE Kent, is that town centre's which have long been in decline would be regenerated. Senior planner at CPRE Kent, Brian Lloyd (above right) said: "We have long been arguing for development to be focused on brownfield sites.

"At a time when there is great pressure for growth, by building on brownfield we would protect our countryside and regenerate our towns and cities."

The charity also says that ensuring brownfield sites are developed first would help to safeguard valuable agricultural land which will ensure food security in the coming years.

Mr Lloyd continued: "We want the government to change its planning policy to prioritise brownfield sites over greenfield.

"There needs to be a proactive approach to identifying brownfield sites and more funding and incentives to develop large and difficult sites."

And the change the charity is calling for seems to be something the government is willing to consider, with the housing and planning minister, Brandon Lewis, saying he welcomed the report from CPRE.

Mr Lewis said: "We welcome this report, which illustrates the scope for building new homes and protecting the countryside at the same time.

"This government wants to see the maximum amount of brownfield land being used to build new homes, whilst also maintaining protections for our beautiful countryside.

"That is why our planning reforms encourage councils to use brownfield land for new buildings, free up disused public sector land for redevelopment and why we've invested £235 million into bringing 80,000 long term empty homes back into use since 2010."

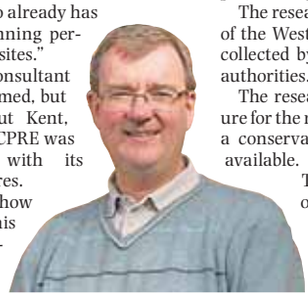
But while CPRE Kent says the report shows there is no need for more greenfield development, Paul Watkins, the leader of Dover District Council (left), says that actually, the situation is much more complex than the numbers suggest.

He said: "Not all brownfield sites are created equal. Some simply aren't suitable for housing for one reason or another and some are economically unviable. They just cannot be built on in a profitable way. That land clearly shouldn't be included in these figures.

"In Dover, we have brownfield sites which have planning permission for housing but which won't be built on unless there is some sort of enabling development to make them profitable for developers.

"Equally, it is important to understand that there needs to be the correct mix of housing with other development on brownfield sites. It isn't just a case of building as many houses as possible on these sites."

He added: "Dover also already has the majority of its planning permissions on brownfield sites."



And a development consultant who chose not to be named, but who works throughout Kent, told KoS that actually, CPRE was being disingenuous with its presentation of the figures.

He said: "It's funny how the group has given this headline figure. However, once you scratch the surface, there are a few issues with it. For instance, the charity appears to be including brownfield sites like Lodge Hill in Medway in its numbers, yet it doesn't support development there."

The research was carried out by the University of the West of England. It used data which was collected by surveying local council's planning authorities.

The researchers believe that actually, the figure for the number of houses that could be built is a conservative estimate with more potentially available.

This, says CPRE, is because the report only identifies land which is already derelict or with planning permission and does not include under used land – such as car parks – which could potentially be used more efficiently.

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Is fracking company looking for methane?

A leaked email shows fracking firm could now be looking for shale gas's 'evil twin' in the east of the county despite saying it had returned its licences giving it exclusive rights to extract here, writes **Jamie Weir**...

EKAF: East Kent Against Fracking group members have a simple message for companies wanting to extract here

FRACKING may have taken a step closer in Kent after it was revealed in a leaked email that the only company to have licences to explore for oil and gas in east Kent is looking to drill in the Tilmanstone area.

Coastal Oil and Gas, which is run by chief executive Gerwyn Williams, gave back many of their Petroleum Exploration and Development Licences (PEDL) earlier this year, with Mr Williams stating that there was no economically viable gas to extract.

The licences, which are issued by the government, give the company which holds them exclusive rights to drill for oil and gas in the area.

The company had been in possession of licences to explore for oil and gas which had led it to apply for planning consent to drill exploratory boreholes in Guston, Sheperdswell, Woodnesborough and Tilmanstone.

But despite applying for planning consent at three sites, the company chose to hand back much of its licensing, reducing the areas it could drill in from around 355 square kilometres to just 95 square kilometres.

However, a leaked email, which was sent to KoS by campaigners from the group East Kent Against Fracking (EKAF) – a pressure group which wants the controversial practice banned – shows that Coastal Oil and Gas is still actively pursuing exploration for gas in the county.

Rosemary Rechter is the chairman for the campaign group.

She told KoS: "Mr Williams stated that Coastal Oil and Gas Ltd had now relinquished their licences for gas exploration in east Kent, as well as their permit at Woodnesborough.

"This statement, like so many from the industry, was contradicted shortly afterwards by Mr Williams himself in an email in which he said 'Guston, Sheperdswell and Woodnesborough have all been surrendered but we have retained Tilmanstone area. Our intention is to drill an exploration hole in the coal measures'.

"It is ironic that this news should come so soon after a debate that so completely trounced the arguments for fracking."

But chief executive of the company, Gerwyn Williams, told KoS that when he said much of east Kent was of no interest to the company, he meant it.

He said: "I'd like it made clear that we have no intention of looking at Shepherdswell, Woodnesborough or Guston for drilling. We have handed the licences back and won't be seeking to drill in these areas.

"To be honest, it really isn't that attractive to drill in Kent, as it doesn't have shale measures. We would be looking for coal bed methane if we were to drill here.

"The economics of drilling coal bed methane are limited compared with shale gas, so drilling here is not as appealing as it was for us."

Coal Bed Methane (CBM) is a natural gas (methane) which has been trapped in coal seams underground. East Kent is a prime location for the gas' extraction because of the various seams of coal which lie in the area.

Many former collieries which were closed never fully extracted the reserves of coal which was mined in east Kent in the late 80s.

Julie Wassmer is an environmental campaigner who has fought against fracking coming to Kent. She told KoS it would be immensely destructive if any drilling were to take place at Tilmanstone – whether it were for CBM or shale gas.

She said: "CBM has been described as 'the evil twin' of shale gas in the family of extreme energy. As with shale, there are similar negative effects on the environment. These can include water contamination, leaks of fugitive methane into the atmosphere and the industrialisation of the countryside.

CAMPAIGNER: Julie Wassmer

COMPANY: Gerwyn Williams

CHAIRMAN: EKAF's Rosemary Rechter

"However, there are other risks more specific to CBM which include a depletion of water table and possible subsidence. The 'produced' water which is brought up from these wells may even contain a concentration of heavy metals and radionuclides."

These heavy metals and radionuclides could potentially be extremely toxic.

And any drilling in east Kent, say campaigners, could lead to serious contamination issues for the chalk aquifer of the North Downs – this vital water source serves 70 per cent of the county's commercial and domestic consumers.

Ms Wassmer said: "There is a high risk of methane and other gases being mobilised by any drilling operation, including for an exploratory borehole, and subsequently migrating into the aquifer.

"The same process could, in extreme cases, re-activate any of the high angle faults in the coal measures and create new fracture patterns, allowing upward migration of gases and liquids into the aquifer, which is itself heavily fissured.

"From a water resources view point, this amounts to a high risk operation, and failure could result in the irreversible contamination of a major water supply source."

But Mr Williams said that residents in east Kent had nothing to be concerned about, and although he was unwilling to talk of whether any area in Tilmanstone had been looked at in detail, he was willing to tell KoS where he would like to drill if given the chance.

He said: "Snowdown Colliery would be our preferred location to drill. It's a good site, and particularly good for us, as it has old coal workings. That is likely to be where we would be successful at finding and extracting CBM in east Kent."

WHAT IS CBM AND HOW IS IT EXTRACTED?

COAL Bed Methane is methane which has been trapped in coal seams underground.

To extract the gas, a borehole is drilled into the seam. Often it is necessary to pump large amounts of water out of the coal seam to lower the pressure and allow the gas to flow out. It can sometimes also be necessary to 'hydraulically fracture' the seam to extract the gas – this involves pumping water mixed with chemicals into the borehole at high pressure, to fracture the coal let the gas flow.

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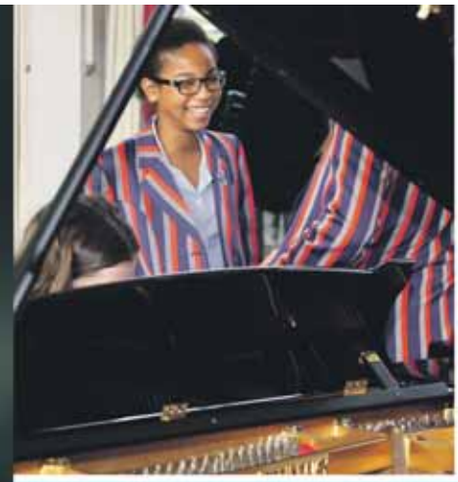

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Bafta delight for Bagpuss creator

Peter Firmin has been handed a top award for his life-time contribution to children's television over the last 50 years

By Chris Murphy
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

LEGENDARY children's TV creator Peter Firmin admitted he was a little "overwhelmed" when he turned up to pick up a prestigious award last Sunday.

Mr Firmin, 85, along with his creative partner Oliver Postgate, created some of the best-loved characters in children's television during the 1960s, '70s' and '80s.

Best known for creating Bagpuss, he was joined on stage at the Bafta Children's Awards by his daughter Emily, who portrayed Emily, owner of the shop where Bagpuss lived, in the original, short-lived, series.

Mr Firmin continues to live and work at his home at Blean, near Canterbury, where he created many of his best known characters. Emily Firmin works as an artist in nearby Whitstable.

Mr Postgate died, aged 83, in Broadstairs almost exactly six years ago.

Between them, they brought to life the likes of Ivor the Engine, the Clangers and Noggin the Nog through their Smallfilms production company.

Appearing at the prestigious British Academy Children's Awards at Camden's The Roundhouse venue last Sunday, he received a special award recognising his outstanding contribution to children's media and the entertainment industry.

The show was presented by another legend of children's TV – Bernard Cribbins.

And there was no denying his star status when he arrived on the red carpet to be greeted by calls from photographers to pose for them. Mr Firmin admitted it had all been "a bit overwhelming".

Speaking to KoS this week, he smiled as he said: "Inside, we had two tables of 10 right at the front and what struck me was the noise inside that place. We were right near some big speakers and it really went through you when they played music.

"But it was wonderful and I still can't believe I have this award. Of course if Oliver was here, he would have been on stage with me – we were a team and always will be."

Mr Firmin, who knew in advance he was to get the award, said: "I am amazed that the things we did here in the barn at Blean with the sort of materials we had has been remembered when all this high-tech stuff is around with its computer generated images.

"Ours were very homemade things, yet people seem to remember them.

"Whether I was deserving of this award, I don't know. I was totally surprised when they offered it to me. People like David Attenborough get things like this, not me."

Of the night itself, he said: "When it came to my bit, I was fairly calm.

"I even managed to get Emily to come and bring me Bagpuss while I was talking – I had a Clanger on stage with me too.

LEGEND: Peter Firmin, Bagpus, and his special award from Bafta for his life-long contribution to children's TV

"And everyone loved it that Emily was there herself. I did think that it would have been nice to have Oliver there too."

Before he went on stage, Bafta screened part of a BBC Wales documentary on the pair, and Mr Firmin admits he found that emotional.

"That was so touching," he said, "because it ended with Oliver and Bagpuss and strangely enough it was Bernard Cribbens narrating it, and it was him who handed me the Bafta award."

The former art teacher added: "We were never trendy. We did what we thought was right. If you're never trendy, you never go out of fashion.

"We were earning a living. Oliver and I were working on our own with a few helpers and we just had to keep going. There wasn't an enormous fortune to be made because the budgets were pretty small in those days. We just had to keep coming up with ideas. We never thought that we were producing things for generations to come.

"Oliver came up with the first stories – Alexander the Mouse and Ivor, things like that – and, later on, Noggin was my idea, and Bagpuss. Just the characters, mind you; he wrote the stories.

"Because we worked together so well, they just seemed to work. And we weren't working for a committee.

"Nowadays, they have to have things very carefully vetted with lots of input from other people; whereas we were allowed to do what we thought was best.

ALL SMILES: Mr Firmin accepts the award with daughter Emily (above), and then introduces a Clanger to host Bernard Cribbins

"Considering how primitive our methods were and how homemade everything was, it's amazing that they've lasted so long and people still remember them."

Harvey Elliott, chairman of Bafta's children's committee, said: "Peter Firmin helped lay the foundations for the industry we see today, all from his small barn in Blean. His legacy is delighting and enchanting a whole new generation with the upcoming remake of family favourite The Clangers.

"Over the past 50 years, Peter's work has thrilled, entertained and inspired generations of filmmakers and animators and he is more than deserving of the Special Award at this year's British Academy Children's Awards."

A new Clangers show is currently in production with Mr Firmin as a consultant and scripts penned by Mr Postgate's son, Daniel.

A DOUBLE ACT CAPABLE OF CREATING CHILDHOOD MAGIC

FOR millions of people, Bagpuss is a cornerstone of their childhood; ''a saggy old cloth cat, baggy, and a bit loose at the seams''.

Generations exposed to the mere 13 episodes created, originally broadcast between February and May 1974, instantly fell in love. And with endless repeats over the years to come, many others did too.

In 1999, a BBC poll named it the greatest children's character of all time. In 1987, both Mr Firmin and Oliver Postgate picked up honorary degrees from the University of Kent for their achievements.

Bagpuss was created and filmed at a barn in Blean where Mr Firmin lived and worked.

Oliver Postgate – the instantly recognisable narrator and writer of so many of their works – lived just a few hundred yards down the road.

There, using stop-motion animation, a time-consuming process of shooting individual frames to emulate movement, they brought to life a character who continues to generate thousands of pounds in merchandising each and every year and whose role in popular culture shows no sign of slowing.

Today, Mr Firmin remains a remarkable individual. Along with his wife Joan, who knitted the original Clangers and made the likes of Madeleine the rag doll and Gabriel the toad in Bagpuss, they remain active and artistic.

Mr Firmin, now 85, remains bright and engaging and enjoys a good working relationship with Daniel Postgate, who inherited his father's share in the Smallfilms production company after Oliver's death in 2008.

They have, in recent months, been working with producers behind the return of the Clangers – with a new series set to hit TV screens around the world next year. And another generation prepares to be raised on the remarkable talents of the Firmin and Postgate double act.

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INCLUDED: Free Bar from 6pm to midnight every night for house beers & spirits, wine by the glass, pumped soft drinks & mixers

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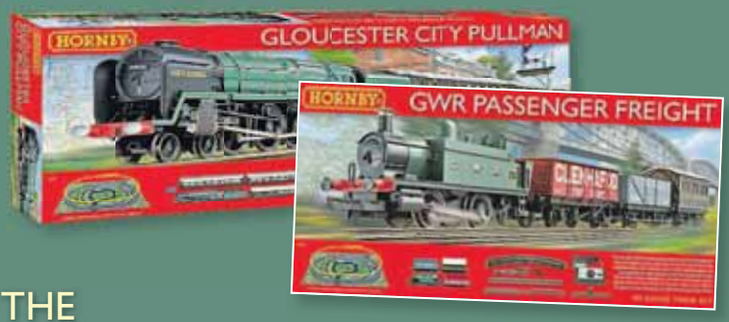

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Welcome To A Kentish Christmas 2014

THERE is no season which brings with it quite so much anticipation, so much excitement and so much fun as Christmas.

It seems to reignite our childhood memories; of smiles, laughter, kindness and warmth.

And with the first window of Advent calendars being opened on Monday, the countdown is very much on to the 2014 festive season.

As ever, the county has an abundance of retail and leisure opportunities geared up to ensure your Christmas is one to remember this year.

From the latest fashions to days out, places to eat and stay to just where you can enjoy a private audience with none other than Father Christmas, you will be spoilt for choice.

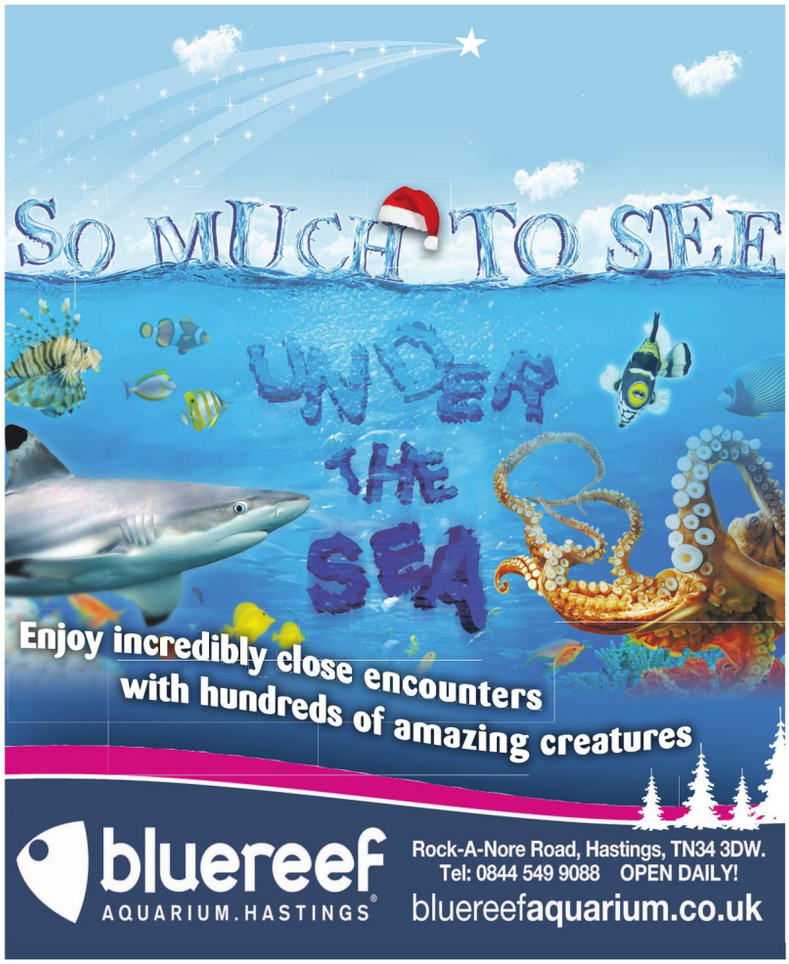
Inside this latest edition of our popular A Kentish Christmas supplement, we highlight everything from recipes to the top toys, what films you can enjoy on a family trip to the cinema and where the best pantomimes can be found.

We even take a look at some of the most beautiful walks you can enjoy to work off some of the calories consumed by one too many mince pies!

What's more, our loyal advertisers are showcasing a host of events and services which they believe will add to the sparkle this Christmas - so be sure to check them out as you enjoy this special edition of A Kentish Christmas.

We may still be a few weeks away from the big day itself, but there's no time like the present to ensure you start preparing in advance. It will allow you to put your feet up and enjoy the very special atmosphere and welcome in your family and friends.

So enjoy A Kentish Christmas and we hope it inspires you at this very special time of the year.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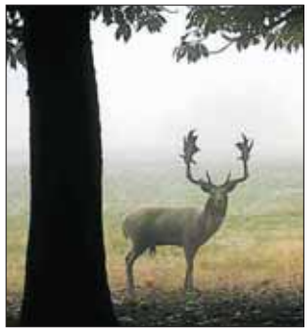

ENJOY: Build up your appetite with a stroll. All pictures: National Trust

Take a winter walk around some of our most picturesque venues

Eaten one too many mince pies? Desperate for a little fresh air? Then stretch your legs this Xmas

THERE'S nothing like a winter walk to build up an appetite - or work off some seasonal excess. And with some of the nation's most historic sites open this Christmas, there are plenty of interesting routes you can take.

The National Trust is renowned for its stately homes and fertile gardens and grounds. And with many of its managed sites open from Boxing Day onwards, there's the perfect opportunity to take a stroll in a picture-postcard landscape.

Explains a spokesman: "You can experience some outdoor delights from avenues of frost-covered topiary and borders packed with sensational colour, to ice-rimmed lakes, windswept beaches and breath-taking vistas."

The following all have special guided walks on Boxing Day and New Year's Day. Check each venue's website for details of opening hours.

Chartwell

Family home of Sir Winston Churchill, you can literally follow in the historic leader's footsteps by spending time in his garden or take one of the many estate walks.

If you want to learn more about him, then visit the winter exhibition, Death of a Hero, commemorating the 50th anniversary of his death and his lasting legacy. Families can try out the Life and Legacy trail around the garden, which leads to the exhibition.

Ightham Mote

Enjoy the peaceful setting of this romantic moated manor house, with its gardens, orchard, water features and woodland walks through the Kent countryside.

Join a Boxing Day or New Year's Day trek, complete with a tasty breakfast to fuel the informal guided walk through the estate or visit over January.

Knole

Whilst Knole's show rooms close for conservation during the winter months, the parkland is as alive as ever. Choose from a range of downloadable walks that offer glimpses of the resident deer herd, flat routes for relaxed strolls and a longer walk to nearby Ightham Mote.

Scotney Castle

During winter, Scotney Castle is transformed into an almost magical landscape, with frost and ice settling on the moat, grass and plants surrounding the ruins of the medieval castle. Further afield, the estate is home to walks through beautiful parkland, woodland and alongside the historic Hop Farm – pick up an estate map from visitor reception and explore three way marked trails.

White Cliffs of Dover

Enjoy an atmospheric walk along the cliff tops throughout winter, spot some of the winter visiting birds including the guillemot out at sea, short eared owl feeding over the grassland or the unmistakeable waxwing in the hedgerows. On New Year's Day, join a free turn up and go walk from the White Cliffs visitor centre to the lighthouse at 11am.

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How to beat the stampede in the rush to secure the must-have toy

Once it was the Rubik's Cube, Action Man, Barbie and the Furbee. Now this year's most in-demand gifts have been revealed. So just what do you need to do to get your hands on the desperate dozen?

AS THE weather turns colder, parents need to be careful not to miss out on getting Frozen this Christmas.

Toy industry experts predict that toys linked to the hit Disney film Frozen will be flying off the shelves during the festive season, and mums and dads whose little girls have set their hearts on items such as the Disney Frozen Snow Glow Elsa doll, which sings Elsa's signature song Let It Go, would be wise to snap it up as soon as possible.

Elsa is one of two Frozen dolls in the Top 12 of this year's DreamToys list of the 72 predicted bestselling toys for Christmas, selected by a panel from the Toy Retailers' Association.

Toy shop owner Gary Grant, chairman of the DreamToys committee, says: "We could sell empty boxes with Frozen written on them at the moment - the demand for Frozen products is exceptional, and not just for the two dolls in the Top 12, but all of them.

"Parents will be racing all round trying to track down all the Frozen items this Christmas. I would really recommend that if children have got Frozen items on their Christmas list, parents get them early and hide them away."

And it's not just little girls who run the risk of missing out on the toy they've set their hearts on this Christmas. Mr Grant says some of the 'techy toys' that boys might have on their wish-lists, like the Zoomer Dino - Boomer - a radio-controlled dinosaur - and the Teksta T-Rex dinosaur, which responds to voices, lights and sounds, "potentially run the risk of being short".

At £99.99 (RRP), the Zoomer Dino - Boomer is the most expensive item in the DreamToys list, says Mr Grant, who points out that about half of the Top 12 toys this year are £25 or under. It's also worth noting that many shops have offers on and you can find some of these toys for half the recommended retail price listed here.

Coming in under the £25 mark is the £19.99 (RRP) Little Live Pets Bird Cage, a chirping bird which records children's voices and repeats what they've said.

Also in the Top 12, but at the higher price of £58.99 (RRP), is My Friend Cayla - a doll that could drive parents crazy this Christmas. Cleverly working through an iPhone or smartphone app, Cayla understands and listens, and will even answer questions. So if the kids are quiet, the doll could still be chattering.

For boys there are, of course, weapons such as the Nerf Demolisher 2-in-1, or the Transformers Stomp and Chomp Grimlock, the biggest ever Transformer. There's even a new Spider-Man (Hasbro £34.99 RRP) in the top 72 DreamToys list.

For preschool children, the Toot-Toot Animals Safari Park - animals that make noises and move round a safari park track, is likely to be in huge demand too.

"Nobody makes any money not having what people want in stock," he says, "and at the moment the industry has relatively good stocks.

"I'm not trying to whip up a frenzy over toys running short - there's adequate toys around, but things change. At this time of year, toy companies are doing a month's worth of trade in a week, and stocks change quickly.

"If something catches on, shortages can appear very quickly. Don't panic, but do what's sensible."

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Dream-Toys Top 12 (in alphabetical order, all RRP)
Bop It! Beats, right, (Hasbro £21.99)
Disney Frozen Snow Glow Elsa (Jakks Pacific £34.99)
Disney Frozen Sparkle Doll (assorted) (Mattel £16.99)
Kidizoom Smart Watch (VTech £39.99)
Little Live Pets Bird Cage, below, (Character £19.99)
Minecraft Figures (assorted) (Character £7.99)
My Friend Cayla (Vivid £58.99)
Nerf Demolisher 2-in-1 (Hasbro £44.99)
The Lego Movie - Benny's Spaceship (LEGO £79.99)
Toot-Toot Animals Safari Park (VTech £39.99)
Transformers Stomp & Chomp Grimlock (Hasbro £89.99)
Zoomer Dino - Boomer (Spin Master £99.99)

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Y g d o the best of the panto season

FOR many, Christmas is not complete until they enjoy an outing to the pantomime with their family or friends.

It remains a valuable and well-loved part of the yearly theatre calender.

Some big names have been recruited in years gone by, and Kent has seen everyone from rapper Vanilla Ice to former Young Ones star Adrian Edmondson and original Star Trek cast member George Takei tread the boards for the annual knees-up.

And this year there is a huge variety of shows on offer around the county, such as Aladdin, Sleeping Beauty and Peter Pan.

With performances currently under way and running up until January, there is plenty of time to see them.

Pantomime remains as popular as ever, with it's anarchic mish-mash of drama, comedy, music and double entendre delighting audiences.

A number of familiar faces will be popping up in this year's productions, with Strictly Come Dancing's sharp-tongued judge Craig Revel Horwood taking on the role of Captain Hook, EastEnders actor Scott Maslen starring in Aladdin and Steps star Ian 'H' Watkins playing the role of Prince Charming.

Here is our guide to 10 of the top pantomimes in Kent to enjoy this year.

The Orchard Theatre, Dartford
Peter Pan featuring Craig Revel Horwood as Captain Hook. Running between December 12 and January 3. Tickets range from £12.50 to £36.50. To book, call 01322 220000 or visit www.orchardtheatre.co.uk

The Marlowe Theatre, Canterbury
Aladdin with an all-star cast including EastEnders' star Scott Maslen. Runs from November 28 to January 11. Tickets range from £14.25. Call 01227 787787 or visit www.marlowetheatre.com to book.

Theatre Royal, Margate
Beauty and the Beast starring former EastEnders' star Ricky Groves. Running from December 13 to December 26. Tickets are from £10. To book, visit www.theatreroyalmargate.com or call 01843 292795.

Leas Cliff Hall, Folkestone
Sleeping Beauty runs from December 23 to January 10. Tickets begin at £14. To book, call 01303 228600 or visit www.atgtickets.com

Hazlitt Arts Centre, Maidstone
Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, with Steps star Ian 'H' Watkins. Runs from December 5 to January 4. Tickets from £12. Visit www.parkwoodtheatres.co.uk or call 01622 758611.

Churchill Theatre, Bromley
Sleeping Beauty, featuring Big Brother contestant Zoe Birkett. Runs from November 28 to January 4. Tickets start at £15. To book, call 08448717620 or visit www.atgtickets.com/bromley

Assembly Halls Theatre, Tunbridge Wells
Peter Pan, featuring Holby City actor Mark Moraghan and Gemma Hunt as Tinkerbell. Runs from December 12 to January 4. Tickets from £16.50. To book visit www.assemblyhalltheatre.co.uk or call 01892 530614.

Winter Gardens, Margate
Rapunzel - A Very Twisted Tale, from December 3 to 7. Tickets from £11. To book, call 01843 292795 or visit www.margatewintergardens.co.uk

Central Theatre, Chatham
Aladdin. Runs from December 11 to January 4. Tickets from £12. Call 01634 338338 to book.

Stag Theatre, Sevenoaks.
Cinderella. Runs from December 6 to 20. Tickets from £21. Call 01732 450175 to book.

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Passion fruit and pomegranate pavlova layer cake

HIT BBC cooking competition The Great British Bake Off has released a new recipe book full of festive treats in time for Christmas.

The Great British Bake Off: Christmas is the ultimate Bake Off Christmas collection with all of Paul Hollywood's and Mary Berry's Christmas masterclass recipes.

It also includes new bakes from all four winners plus other contestants.

This beautifully tiered pavlova will make an impressive centrepiece for everyone to gather around.

Ingredients
Serves 12–16
- 750ml double cream
- 2 tablespoons Cointreau
- 3 tablespoons orange curd
- 3 tablespoons lemon curd
- zest of 2 limes, thinly pared
- seeds of 2 pomegranates
- runny honey, for drizzling
- 10 medium egg whites
- 525g caster sugar

For the topping and filling:
- 4 passion fruit, scooped out and sieved, seeds discarded
- 3 tablespoons caster sugar

Method
1. Heat the oven to 110°C/225°F/gas 1/4. Line 3 baking sheets with baking paper, then draw a 27cm circle on one sheet and a 22cm circle and an 18cm circle on the other sheets.
2. Whisk the egg whites in a large bowl using a hand-held electric whisk, until they form stiff peaks. Still whisking, add the sugar, a little at a time, until the mixture is thick and glossy.
3. Spoon half the mixture over the largest circle, and divide the rest between the smaller two, putting slightly more on the middle-sized circle. Use the back of a spoon to spread the mixture to the edges of your circles and make pretty swirls and peaks. Transfer to the heated oven and cook for 5 hours, then turn off the heat and leave in the oven to cool completely.
4. To assemble, stir the passion fruit juice and sugar into the double cream – the mixture will thicken with the acid from the juice. Stir in the Cointreau and curds to make a luscious thick cream. If it is not thick enough (some passion fruit are juicier than others), whisk a little; if too thick, add a splash more cream.
5. Place the largest meringue on a flat serving plate and spoon over one-third of the cream. Scatter with some pomegranate seeds and lime zest. Top with the second largest meringue and spoon over another third of cream and more seeds and zest. Top with the smallest meringue and finish with the rest of the cream, seeds and zest. Drizzle all over with the honey and serve.

BAKE OFF BOOK: Written by Lizzie Kamenetzky BBC Books. Hardback, £20. Photography by Laura Edwards

SAINSBURY'S, 6 DEEP MINCE PIES, £1.30 : Nice golden colour, right amount of crumble, filling had a nice orangey flavour and was plentiful. ★★★★

MARKS AND SPENCERS, 6 ALL BUTTER MINCE PIES, £1.80: Large in size but not enough rich and tasty filling. Pastry a bit dry. ★★★

TESCO, FINEST 6 ALL BUTTER DEEP FILLED MINCE PIES, £2.50 : Best looking out of the bunch, lovely fruity flavour, and good pastry. ★★★★

WAITROSE, 6 ALL BUTTER MINCE PIES, £2.50: Tasting team's favourite. Rich, buttery pastry and a really moist and flavoursome filling. ★★★★★

LIDL, 12 SNOWY LODGE MINCE PIES, £1.49: Very cheap, but sadly not so cheerful. Poorly finished, paste-like filling and undercooked pastry. ★

Mince pies put to the test

IT was a tough job but someone had to do it. We put the leading supermarkets' mince pie collections through their paces in a special festive taste test.

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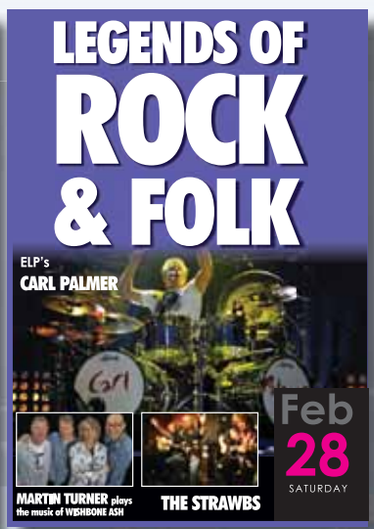

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Get stylish at Bouverie Place

AS SHOPPERS flock to Folkestone shopping centre Bouverie Place in the run-up to Christmas, one young star in the making will be preparing for her first steps into the world of fashion modelling next year.

Jasie Hibbard, 12, was chosen as the overall Modelsearch winner from a contest staged at the popular retail centre.

Jasie was chosen from over 230 people who entered the Bouverie Place Modelsearch event and will now join models from seven other shopping centres at a professional fashion photo shoot in London in spring 2015.

As part of her prize, Jasie took part in a photo shoot on location at Bouverie Place.

As our picture shows, she is modelling an outfit from the latest collections at New Look.

There is all the winter and party fashion you could wish for at the centre's shops including TK Maxx, Next, Primark, New Look, George and Peacocks.

STYLE: Jasie Hibbard models a two-tone Chelsea check jacket £54.99 and Matilda high neck jumper £14.99, from New Look

A special visitor has already arrived for his stay this season, as Santa has set up in his grotto between 10am and 4pm ever Saturday and Sunday.

He will be in his grotto every day from Monday December 15 to Tuesday December 23.

Children can visit Santa for free, but donations to Footprints Inspirational Care Services for children and young people with disabilities, would be greatly appreciated.

What's more, every child who visits Santa in his grotto will receive a bag of magic reindeer food.

PREPARED: Santa will be spending time at Faversham's Alexander Centre ahead of his round-the-world trip on Christmas Eve. You can secure tickets to visit him at the centre now.

Santa all set for his stay at Alexander Centre

FATHER Christmas will be visiting the Alexander Centre in Faversham again this year as he gears up for his busiest day of the year.

Santa will be waiting to meet visitors in the Mayor's Parlour at the centre in Preston Street as he looks to get those last minute present requests in before he heads back to the North Pole to prepare for Christmas Eve.

The jolly red-faced gentleman will be at the Alexander Centre on:

Thursday, December 18, from 3pm-7pm

Friday, December 19 from 3pm-7pm

Saturday, December 20 from 10am-4pm

Sunday, December 22 from 10am-4pm

Tickets are £6 each.

Every good boy or girl will receive a gift and a chocolate from Father Christmas. Children will also be able to take part in Christmas craft activities.

The classic pop-up tearoom will be open and ready to serve a delicious assortment of home-made cakes, mince pies and many other festive offerings.

Also on the Saturday and Sunday, grown-ups will be able to pick a few last minute bargains in the centre's Big Christmas Market, open 10am to 4pm

Meanwhile, on Monday, December 22, Coco and the Butterfields will be performing at the centre as part of iheir Christmas tour.

For tickets contact 01795 594460 or via e-mail bookings@thealexandercentre.com. Or call in to the centre and speak to staff.

Video game gift ideas

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LEGO Batman 3: Beyond Gotham:
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Halo: The Master Chief Collection
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Paddington
Cert PG
With an all-star cast including Hugh Bonneville, Colin Firth, Nicole Kidman and Julie Walters, Michael Bond's beloved creation Paddington is being brought to life by producer David Heyman (the Harry Potter films, Gravity) and director Paul King (Come Fly With Me, The Mighty Boosh).

Big movies for the big season

Our pick of the top films at a cinema near you during December

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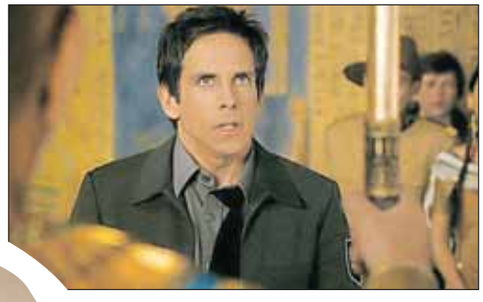
Beaverwood Club
The Beaverwood Club
Beaverwood Road, Chislehurst, Kent BR7 6HF
Tel: 020 8300 1385
Email: info@thebeaverwoodclub.co.uk

www.thebeaverwoodclub.co.uk

Nativity 3: Dude Where's My Donkey?
Cert U
The pupils of St Bernadette's and the madcap Mr Poppy are back! When their new teacher Mr Shepherd (Martin Clunes) loses his memory as well as Archie the Donkey, it's up to them to reunite him with his fiancée Sophie (Catherine Tate) in New York.

Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
Cert PG-13
Everyone's favourite gang of reptilian martial arts masters is back fighting crime on the streets of New York. When a kingpin threatens the city, the group of mutated turtle warriors must emerge from the shadows to protect their home. Starring Megan Fox and Will Arnett.

Annie
Cert PG
This musical comedy returns to the big screen with a contemporary twist following the story of orphan Annie (Quvenzhané Wallis) who has led a hard-knock life with mean foster-mother, Miss Hannigan. All that changes when billionaire Will Stacks (Jamie Foxx) takes her in.



Night at the Museum: Secret of the Tomb
Cert PG
Larry spans the globe, uniting favourite and new characters while embarking on an epic quest to save the magic before it is gone forever. This sequel to the 2009 film stars Ben Stiller, Robin Williams, Owen Wilson, Dan Stevens and Ben Kingsley.

Dumb and Dumber To
Cert PG- 13

In need of a new kidney and having learned that he has a long-lost daughter, dimwit Harry Dunne (Jeff Daniels) snaps his equally cretinous pal, Lloyd Christmas (Jim Carrey), out of an apparent fugue state to accompany him on a journey to find her.

The Hobbit: The Battle of the Five Armies
Cert 12A
This brings to an epic conclusion the adventures of Bilbo Baggins (Martin Freeman), Thorin Oakenshield (Richard Armitage) and the Company of Dwarves. Having reclaimed their homeland from the Dragon Smaug, the company has unwittingly released a deadly force.

Get Santa
Cert PG

A father and son team up to save Christmas once they discover Santa Claus sleeping in their garage after crashing his sleigh and finding himself on the run from the police. With Warwick Davies, Stephen Graham and Jim Broadbent.

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4x4s: A Buyer's Guide Vehicles

4x4 sales set to soar?

By Steve Loader

EVEN the most optimistic weather forecasts for this winter, say it will be much colder than last time, while some experts say it could be the coldest for a century.

That would be pretty cold then, bearing in mind the 'Big Freeze' of 1962.

Apart from the weather, we also need to reckon with the deterioration of Kent roads, caught between several tarmac-cracking winters and budget cutbacks – despite the county council's increased repairs programme.

So it's no wonder the traditional four-wheel drive vehicle buying season looms larger than usual, also highlighting reconciliation with the type, which earned a reputation for gas guzzling when the economy took a downturn.

From being the darlings of city dwellers who liked to suggest that they were country people, they were suddenly cast as villains.

But even 4x4s have got greener as the buying public grapples with its eco-conscience as well as that other eco – the economy. As a result, there has been a reconciliation with the 'funky chunky' 4x4 look.

Indeed, lots of so-called 4x4s or SUVs (sports utility vehicles) are not even four-wheel drive any more.

Read our special section to find out more about 4x4s and SUVs and which ones may suit you.

FUNKY CHUNKY: The 4x4 style of the forthcoming all-new Land Rover Discovery Sport (right), Hyundai Santa Fe (above) and Kia Sportage (left).

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ix35

Personal Contract Purchase Representative Example
ix35 S 1.6 GDi

36 Monthly Payments Of	£239	Total Amount Payable	£18,688.90
Customer Deposit	£4,092.40	Optional Final Payment	£5,992.50
Total Deposit	£4,092.40	Duration of Agreement	36 months
Cash Price of Vehicle	£17,000	Representative APR %	5.9% APR
Total Amount of Credit	£12,907.60	Fixed Interest Rate % p.a.	3.04%
Interest Charges	£1,688.90	Excess Mileage Charge Per Mile	14.9p
		Annual Mileage	10,000

Santa Fe

Personal Contract Purchase Example
Santa Fe Style 2.2 CRDi

36 Monthly Payments Of	£299	Total Amount Payable	£31,018.57
Customer Deposit	£9,544.57	Optional Final Payment	£10,710
Total Deposit	£9,544.57	Duration of Agreement	36 months
Cash Price of Vehicle	£28,385	APR %	5.9% APR
Total Amount of Credit	£18,840.43	Fixed Interest Rate % p.a.	3.04%
Interest Charges	£2,633.57	Excess Mileage Charge Per Mile	14.9p
		Annual Mileage	10,000

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Fuel consumption in MPG (l/100km) for Hyundai ix35 S 1.6 GDi: Urban 34.4 (8.2), Extra Urban 47.1 (6.0), Combined 41.5 (6.8), CO_2 Emissions 158 g/km. Fuel consumption in MPG (l/100km) for Hyundai Santa Fe Style 2.2 CRDi 5 seat: Urban 37.7 (7.5), Extra Urban 54.3 (5.2), Combined 46.3 (6.1), CO_2 Emissions 159 g/km. Fuel consumption: figures shown are based on official EU test figures. These are to be used as a guide for comparative purposes and may not reflect all driving results.

YOU WILL NOT OWN THE VEHICLE UNTIL ALL PAYMENTS ARE MADE. Deposit from 0–40% available. At the end of the agreement there are 3 options: (i) Renew: Part exchange the vehicle. (ii) Retain: Pay the Optional Final Payment to own the vehicle or (iii) Return the vehicle. Further charges may be made subject to mileage and condition of the vehicle. WE CAN INTRODUCE YOU TO A LIMITED NUMBER OF CAREFULLY SELECTED FINANCE PROVIDERS. WE MAY RECEIVE A COMMISSION FROM THEM FOR THE INTRODUCTION. Terms and conditions apply. Finance subject to status. Applicants must be 18 or over. Guarantees/Indemnities may be required. Hyundai Motor Finance RH1 1SR.

Models shown: ix35 S 1.6 GDi at £17,000 OTR in solid paint at no extra cost. Santa Fe Style 2.2 CRDi 4WD 5 seat at £28,385 in metallic paint at £585. On the road (OTR) price shown includes customer saving discount where applicable, VAT where applicable, delivery, vehicle first registration fee, number plates and 12 months' Road Fund Licence. All offers, finance and savings are subject to availability and are only available to private retail customers on new cars purchased and registered in the UK (excluding Channel Islands or Isle of Man), between 1st October and 31st December 2014, inclusive, sourced through Hyundai Motor UK Ltd or its authorised dealers. † 5 Year Warranty terms and exclusions apply. Please see www.hyundai.co.uk or ask your local Dealer.

Size does matter

WHAT'S YOUR BUDGET? Toyota's legendary Land Cruiser (left) is one of the great go anywhere 4x4s, but the Skoda Yeti (above) and new Jeep Cherokee (below) offers cut-price off-road 4x4 performance

THERE are so many shades of 4x4 vehicles now, ranging from big and beefy go anywhere true off-roaders, right down to so-called 'soft-roaders' or SUVs.

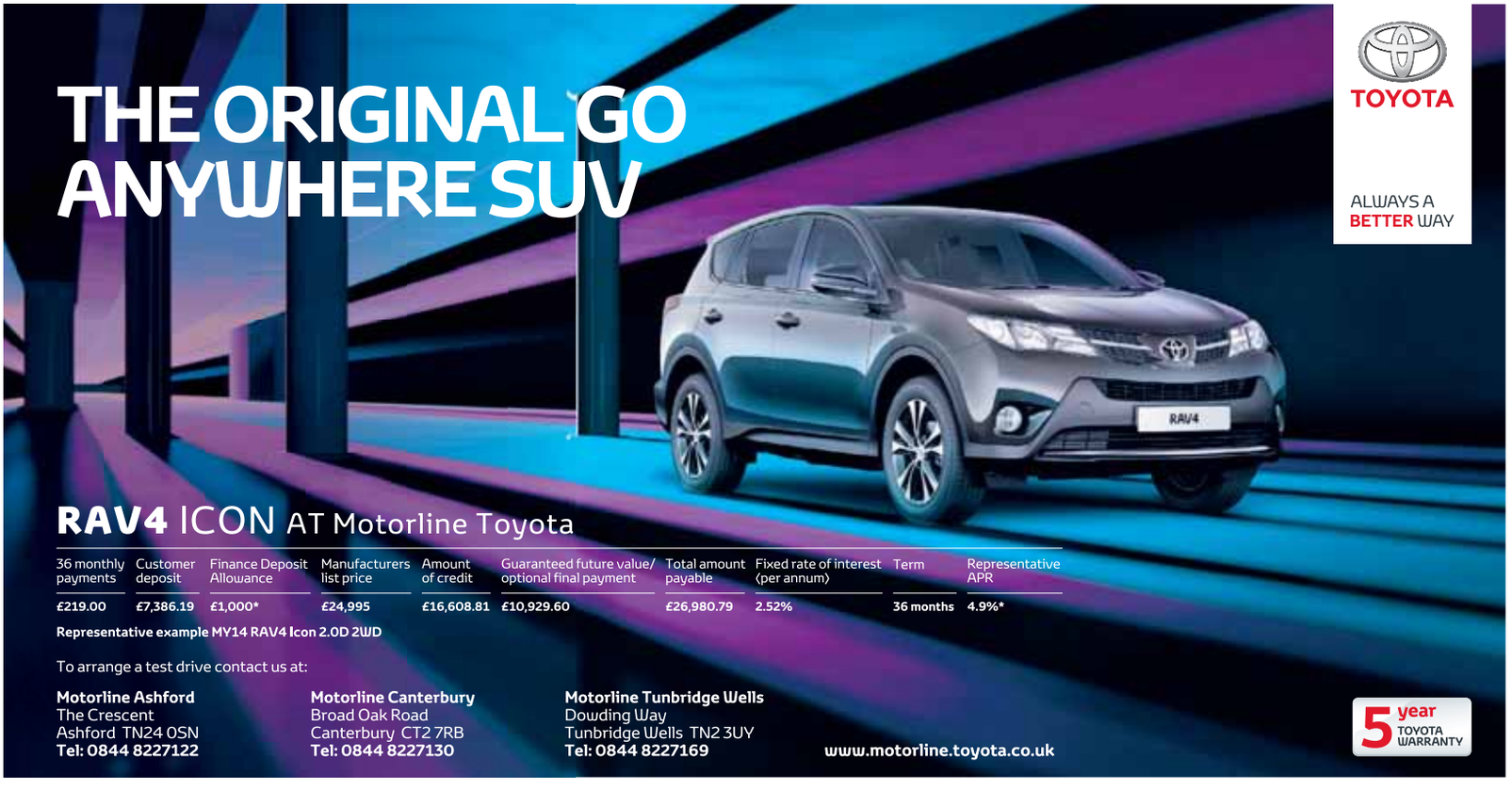
The latter might not have the ground clearance to go yomping over rough terrain, but drive to all four wheels can kick in for extra grip when it matters, and they're cheaper to buy and run too.

The breakthrough has been the arrival of more economical but punchy diesel engines and cheaper all-wheel drive systems, allowing the car to run in two-wheel drive most of the time, saving fuel, emissions and tyres, while automatically reverting to 4x4 if sensors recognise that traction is being lost by the rear wheels.

At the top end though, 4x4 is usually permanent with true off-roaders, and comes with two sets of gear ratios: one for normal conditions and a second and much lower set for extra power and traction when the going gets really tough.

Sometimes, this is packaged as a system that allows selection of a mode according to terrain or conditions, leaving the car to work out the best gears and chassis set-up faster than the human at the wheel.

But bulk and grunt are not everything; weight can be a curse in tough situations; lighter 4x4s can be just as effective, providing there is enough ground clearance and you don't expect Herculean climbs in mud or snow.



Model shown is MY14 RAV4 Icon 5 door 2.0 D 2WD Manual £24,995. Offer excludes metallic paint extra £495. Prices correct at time of going to press. *4.9% APR Representative and £1,000 Finance Deposit Allowance is available on new retail sales of RAV4 when ordered between 1st October and 15th December 2014 and registered and financed through Toyota Financial Services before 31st December on a 36 month AccessToyota (PCP) plan with 0-35% deposit. Toyota Financial Services (UK) PLC; registered office, Great Burgh, Burgh Heath, Epsom, Surrey KT18 5UZ. Authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority. Indemnities may be required. Finance subject to status to over 18s. Other finance offers are available but cannot be used in conjunction with these offers. Excess miles over 30,000 miles charged at 12p per mile. Toyota Centres are independent of Toyota Financial Services. Terms and conditions apply. Affordable finance through AccessToyota. 5 year/100,000 mile manufacturer warranty subject to terms and conditions.

MY14 RAV4 Icon 2.0 D 2WD. Official Fuel Consumption Figures in mpg (l/100km): Urban 49.6 (5.7), Extra Urban 62.8 (4.4), Combined 57.6 (4.9). CO2 Emissions 128g/km. The mpg figures quoted are sourced from official EU-Regulated test results. These are provided for comparability purposes and may not reflect your driving experience.

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The official fuel consumption figures in mpg (l/100km) for the New Dacia Duster range are: urban 27.2 (10.4)-49.6 (5.7); extra-urban 40.3 (7)-61.4 (4.6); combined 35.3 (8)-56.5 (5). The official CO_2 emissions are 185-130g/km. EU Directive and Regulation 692/2008 test environment figures. Fuel consumption and CO_2 may vary according to driving styles, road conditions and other factors.

*Prices shown include delivery to dealer, number plates, 20% VAT, 12-month government road fund licence and £55 first registration fee. Prices shown are manufacturer's recommended retail prices. Finance provided by RCI Financial Services Limited, PO Box 149, Watford WD17 1FJ. Subject to status. Guarantees and indemnities may be required. You must be at least 18 and a UK resident (excluding the Isle of Man and Channel Islands). Terms and conditions apply. Our dealership introduces customers to a limited number of financial providers including RCI Financial Services Ltd.

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Duration	36 months	Option to purchase fee^^	£60
35 monthly payments of	£199	Total amount payable	£25,195.60
Deposit*	£6,784.51	Total amount of credit	£17,205.49
Retail cash price	£23,990	Representative APR	2.9% APR
Acceptance fee^	£125	Interest rate	2.4%
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Gillingham, Kent ME8 0SW
0843 658 9764
www.motorline.co.uk/skoda

#At the end of a Solutions Personal Contract Plan (PCP) agreement there are three options: i) retain the vehicle – pay the optional final payment to own the vehicle; ii) return the vehicle (you may be charged for excess wear and tear); or iii) replace: part-exchange the vehicle, subject to status.
*Available when purchased with ŠKODA Solutions PCP Finance. ^Payable as first payment. ^^Payable with optional final payment. †Depending on agreed annual mileage. **Up to 3 years/30,000 miles (whichever comes first) when purchased with Solutions PCP. Retail sales only. Offer available on vehicles ordered by 31 December 2014 from participating retailers. Offers are not available with any other offer and may be varied or withdrawn at any time. Available to 18s and over. Subject to availability. Finance subject to status. Terms and conditions apply. Accurate at time of print. ŠKODA Finance, Freepost ŠKODA Finance.

Official fuel consumption for the ŠKODA Yeti range in mpg (litres/100km): Urban 28.8 (9.8) to 54.3 (5.2); Extra Urban 42.8 (6.6) to 67.3 (4.2); Combined 36.2 (7.8) to 61.4 (4.6). CO_2 range emissions 184 to 119g/km. Standard EU test figures for comparative purposes and may not reflect real driving results.

But is it a 4x4 you really need?

RECESSION has had a seismic effect on 4x4/SUV buying habits. The need to cut back made consumers shun the higher running costs of what were generally bulkier and heavier cars.

But manufacturers countered with smaller, lighter and more convenient editions; buyers realised that they could have their 4x4 cake and eat it.

A little later, there was a further shift in the market, one seen as heresy a few years ago: 'two-wheel drive 4x4s'.

Carmakers had tried this tactic before and it flopped spectacularly; buyers may have realised deep down that being a 'townie' and driving a 4x4 was a bit of a sham, but they weren't about to give up on authentic 4x4 power.

The recession and greater eco-awareness changed that, so now we have SUVs and crossovers that look rough and tough, but sip the fuel and return lower CO2 emissions.

And removing the rear transmission from a 4x4 vehicle not only cuts weight, but can also liberate valuable underfloor space in the boot.

These 'pseudo-4x4s' come in two formats: 'SUV Lite' which are front-wheel drive versions of models also available with 4x4, and crossovers that are a rugged looking cross between family hatchbacks, SUV and MPV, mixing the best of the three types.

Thanks to the weight saving they can also be more fun to drive, suffering less body roll on bends, and deliver a smoother ride.

They also prove a point we all knew deep down: our craze for 4x4s was just as much about looks as it was about getting a grip.

So, be honest about what you want from your 4x4/SUV/crossover.

If it's about style with economy then go front-wheel drive, but if you have to battle terrain and the elements where you live or do heavy duty towing – a boat, trailer or caravan perhaps – then full 4x4 is king and you shouldn't compromise.

4X4 LOOKS + 2X4 ECONOMY: Front-wheel drive versions of the Toyota RAV4 (bottom left), Hyundai ix35 (bottom right), and Renault's stunning front wheel drive only Renault Captur (top), offer 4x4 style with economy and lower emissions.

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Fuel consumption figures for the CR-V 2.2 i-DTEC Black Edition in mpg (l/100km): Urban 43.5 (6.5), Extra Urban 55.4 (5.1), Combined 50.4 (5.6). CO_2 emissions: 149g/km. Fuel consumption figures sourced from official EU-regulated laboratory test results, are provided for comparison purposes and may not reflect real-life driving experience.

Model Shown: CR-V 2.2 i-DTEC Black Special Edition in Crystal Black Pearl at £30,510 On The Road (OTR). **Terms and Conditions:** New retail CR-V registered from 1 November 2014 to 05 January 2015. Subject to model and colour availability. Offers applicable at participating dealers and are at the promoter's absolute discretion. **CR-V Deposit contribution:** £1,000 Honda deposit contribution on CR-V models (excludes S grades) purchased through Honda Aspirations. **CR-V Black Special Edition Honda Aspirations (PCP):** *4.9% APR Representative example shown based on CR-V 2.2 i-DTEC Black Edition in Crystal Black Pearl at £30,510 total cash price (and total amount payable) with 37 months 4.9% APR Representative (interest rate per annum 4.76% fixed). Minimum customer deposit 0%, maximum customer deposit 30%. Representative example based on a £7,552.90 (25%) deposit = £309 monthly payment, Guaranteed Future Value / Optional Final Payment of £13,438.87, annual mileage of 10,000 and excess mileage charge: 7p per mile. You do not have to pay the Final Payment if you return the car at the end of the agreement and you have paid all other amounts due, the vehicle is in good condition and has been serviced in accordance with the Honda service book and the maximum annual mileage of 10,000 has not been exceeded. Indemnities may be required in certain circumstances. Finance is only available to persons aged 18 or over, subject to status. All figures are correct at time of publication but may be subject to change. Credit provided by Honda Finance Europe Plc. 470 London Road, Slough, Berkshire SL3 8QY. Honda Finance Europe Plc. is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority, Financial Services Register number 312541. **5 Years Servicing includes:** All scheduled servicing, as detailed in the vehicles service book, will be covered for 5 years or 62,500 miles, whichever comes first. 5 Years Servicing is optional. It is being offered for £500 including VAT (usual value £1,430 including VAT, resulting in a saving of £930 for the customer) and is available to finance or non-finance customers. Please note, should you sell the vehicle during the period of cover, the package remains with the vehicle.

Do I really need a full on 4x4?

GOING 4x4 is a no-brainer if you work on a farm, or construction sites, or live in a rural area with plenty of mud or snow.

Some would-be buyers also need a 4x4 for towing; they can pull greater weights and all-wheel drive is a major reassurance when doing so.

But they are not a cheap option if you rarely need the full 4x4 potential, which is why smaller and less expensive SUVs (sports utility vehicles) or 4x4 estates have evolved.

These deliver all the image and space of a top grade 4x4, but are more economical, being lighter and usually equipped with an all-wheel drive system that mostly runs in front-wheel drive, either by manual selection or automatic function – the latter diverts more power and grip to the rear wheels if needed.

Then you must decide on the powertrain; diesel is preferred as it gives good low down power when the going gets tough. It's also better for fuel and CO2 emissions, but diesels usually cost more upfront than petrol models, so you need to cover more miles to recoup the extra outlay via fuel savings.

How many seats? Some models offer five or seven: go for the latter if you can afford it as there will always be a time when you need those extra seats, and these cars tend to depreciate less due to greater secondhand demand.

Cars designed to hold up to seven, are almost certain to have more load space too, but they may be bulkier than you need; for many people, the attraction of SUVs is getting the 4x4 look without having to worry about accessing tight parking spaces.

4X4 DASH FOR LESS CASH: the Honda CR-V (below right) and Skoda Octavia Scout (below left) are more affordable 4x4 cars, while the Renault Scenic XMOD (top) uses clever traction control on its front wheels to mimic all-wheel drive

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Official Fuel Consumption Figures for the New Discovery Sport range in mpg(1/100km): Urban 38.2 (7.4) - 40.4 (7.0), Extra Urban 49.6 (5.7) - 50.4 (5.6), Combined 44.8 (6.3) - 46.3 (6.1). CO_2 emmissions 166-162 g/km.
The figures provided are as a result of official manufacturer's tests in accordance with EU legislation. A vehicle's actual fuel consumption may differ from that achieved in such tests and these figures are for comparative purposes only.

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FUEL CONSUMPTION FIGURES FOR THE NEW JEEP CHEROKEE DIESEL RANGE IN MPG (L/100KM): EXTRA URBAN 55.4 (5.1) – 61.4 (4.6), URBAN 39.8 (7.1) – 44.1 (6.4), COMBINED 48.7 (5.8) – 53.3 (5.3), CO_2 EMISSIONS: 154 – 139 G/KM.

Fuel consumption and CO_2 figures are obtained for comparative purposes in accordance with EC directives/regulations and may not be representative of real-life driving conditions. Factors such as driving style, weather and road conditions may also have a significant effect on fuel consumption. Model shown: New Cherokee Limited £31,820 OTR including metallic paint at £625. Promotion available on new Cherokee models registered by 31st December 2014. ^^Deposit contribution available in conjunction with Jeep hire purchase or Jeep Horizon PCP. **0% Apr Representative Hire Purchase available for a 3 year term with a minimum deposit of 12% required. Finance subject to status. Guarantees may be required. Terms and conditions apply. We work with a number of creditors including Jeep Financial Services, Jeep Financial Services PO Box, Slough, SL1 0RW. *New Cherokee will benefit from complimentary servicing to cover the car for 3 years or 30,000 miles including protection for the first MOT on all qualifying retail sales. At participating Dealers only. Fiat - Chrysler and CNH Industrial are Official Global Partners of the Expo Milano 2015. To find out more please visit jeep.co.uk. Prices and specifications correct at the time of going to print (10/14). Jeep® is a registered trademark of Chrysler Group LLC.

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JACKIE very pretty leggy well-mannered/educated 28yr old female, loves nights in/out, sports, WLTM sincere male up to 35yrs for friendship, hopefully ltr. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415377**

ATTRACTIVE female, seeking single male to enhance my happy life. Enjoys travel, good conversation, walking and music. **Text Only Mailbox Box No: 4564712**

DONNA 36yrs un-modest but very attractive, nice eyes, good figure, GSOH, OHAC, great job, sick of never meeting Mr Right, looking for someone special. Genuine male please. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415187**

ALISON 27yr old very bored broadminded female with plenty of free time on her hands looking for some adult fun times. Call me, I won't disappoint. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415177**

SOPHIA young 40yrs, married but bored, seeks discreet adult fun, any area, all calls answered. **Tel No: 0905 002 1883 Box No: 413399**

DEE lonely divorced female, slim, bubbly, attractive redhead, loves cuddles, looking for a man who can restore my faith in love and make me laugh. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414961**

LUCY, 32yrs, blonde lady seeks naughty boys of any age for no strings fun. **Tel No: 0905 002 1887 Box No: 413443**

JACKIE extremely sensual lady but for your eyes only! likes horses, keeping fit, gardening looking for genuine love interest and companionship. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414721**

ADVENTUROUS sexy lady, 38yrs, married but seeks no strings fun with discreet man, any age. I'm tall, slim and dominant. Aca. **Tel No: 0905 002 1937 Box No: 415301**

TERI separated single lady, blonde, blue eyes, slim, WLTM compatible male for genuine friendship, meals out, weekends away, nights out and more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414361**

LUCY, broadminded 18yrs seeks discreet fun with men any age. Aca. **Tel No: 0905 002 1941 Box No: 365051**

FEMALE seeking male for adult fun. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 413809**

SEXY brunette, mid 20's busty, adventurous broad minded seeks no strings fun. **Tel No: 0905 002 1949 Box No: 361739**

DEBBIE brown eyed attractive social female, romantic, good listener, loves children, looking for similar nice male/dad to get to know, hopefully leading to more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414383**

SALLY, 38yrs large cuddly lady seeks slim men for discreet meetings. **Text Only 4550193**

EMMA slim 5ft 8ins, single employed female with OHAC, enjoys many interests, gym, music, easy-going, genuine, supportive, seeking similar male for a chat, maybe a date. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414957**

TRUDY 36yrs, wltm broadminded men of any age/area for daytime meetings. **Text Only 4550194**

JEAN slim blonde divorcee bubbly affectionate, romantic with lots of love to give, looking for man who knows how to look after a lady for meals in/out, friendship/ltr. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414699**

MELANIE, 38, slim, blonde and bored. Call if you want no strings fun. **Text Only 4550198**

PETITE Asian lady, slim, N/S, seeks genuine N/S male for wining/dining, fun and frolics. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414515**

First 3 messages received are free; thereafter £1.50. Text STOP to 89990 to exit at any time.

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JANINE 36, faithful, sincere, will never stray seeking similar male. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414629**

JENNI, 52 bored housewife wants no strings fun with younger chap. **Text Only 4550197**

JANE 48yr old young looking professional female, tall, green eyes, attractive, size 12-14, enjoys walking, keeping active, nights in/out, good wine/conversation, seeking soul mate. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414729**

ELAINE 30, fit, sexy, curvy black lady, very feminine, loves wining, dining, nights in, seeks solvent white 40's male who is passionate, loving and caring. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414711**

DAWN 34, petite auburn haired female, size 12, sensitive, loving, affectionate, WLTM similar homely male who will spend lots of quality times with me for ltr. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414499**

KAREN 35 petite dark hair/eyed affectionate, caring, lovely female with many interests looking for genuine tlc from loving soul mate, dark haired preferred. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414487**

JULIE good looking 40's female, medium build, size 12, loveable, considerate, OHAC, likes nights in/out, walking, seeking loving male without lots of baggage. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414387**

HELEN 19yr old bubbly female looking for male to take me out and show me a good time. No pressure just fun times, no time wasters. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414223**

FREE single 25yr old busty curvy black beauty, sensual, confident, interesting, looking for handsome man to call me back. Race/age unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414219**

BLUE eyed slim pretty easy going hardworking lady seeking male to put the spark back into my life, must be honest, affectionate, have a GSOH and wont to work at a relationship. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414217**

MO 36yr old slim blue eyed pretty blonde looking for fun times with non-judgemental, discreet, kind male. Age/status unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414215**

JANE 29, loves riding and spending time horsing around, seeking non serious kind of normal guy who enjoys going out having a good time. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414205**

KAREN young looking attractive vibrant slim blonde, enjoys to keep fit, beach walks, travel, meals in/out, good conversation with pleasant company, WLTM genuine sincere male. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414203**

SANDRA attractive lady seeking someone special to help regain my trust in the male species. Only genuine guys pls, I will be worth your time, you won't be disappointed. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414195**

FEMALE seeking male for adult fun. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 413809**

TRACY 35yr busty bubbly out there sized 18 lady looking for a caring loving guy who appreciates womanly curves, over indulgences and having fun. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414189**

MARY tall blonde size 12 lady, nice personality, good conversationalist, varied and open to interests, loves weekends away/holidays, seeking similar male. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414179**

SLIM tall, elegant, feminine, N/S, solvent lady, young 50's, likes travel, red wine, seeks tall, sincere, military, retired, professional gentleman of high calibre. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414251**

JANE 29yr old horsey female, loves the outdoors, cycling, as well as duvet days, WLTM not too serious male for a hopefully normal relationship. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412315**

68YR old widow, seeking company of a male, 68-75 for friendship, likes cinema, theatre, nights in, meals out, seaside walks. Wants someone to help me love again. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 413689**

BBW 51, caring, solvent, seeks male of similar age for fun times and socialising. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 413621**

FEMALE 38, attractive, African, single mum, seeks male, 35-50 for nights out, socialising, friendship and fun. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412793**

PETITE slim blonde 39yrs, pretty big blue eyes, looking for similar easygoing older male to put a spark back into my life, enjoy nights in/out and more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412327**

WIDOW 70, lonely, seeking gent, 70-75 to bring a bit of sparkle back in life, likes theatre, cinema. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412475**

KATIE 26yr old pretty slim blue eyed blonde looking for evening entertainment with open-minded discreet guy, any age. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412319**

MARY 5ft 6in size 12 blonde, nice personality, good conversationalist, interesting, lots of interests WLTM likeminded caring, happy male. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412169**

Men Seeking

REMEMBER: Calls cost £1.53 per minute plus network extras. mydate24

GRAHAM tall, semi-retired, Piscean, likes sailing, seeks female, any nationality. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415463**

JAMES, hard working single dad, late 30's seeks single mum for family days out. **Text Only 4550196**

SIMON 49, actor, likes music, films, reading, puzzles, loop holes, ambiguity, seeks pretty leggy female , 35 plus for friendship. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415447**

JOHN, 42yrs professional genuine gent seeks caring lady to treat as a princess. **Text Only 4550195**

MIKE Canterbury mature male, seeks single mum/lady, 28-42, slim-medium build for loving, caring relationship. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415275**

BUILDER 45, tall, good-looking, kind, considerate, easy going seeks female. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415315**

52YR old male, seeks female for adult fun and friendship. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415261**

SIMON 49, actor, likes music, films, reading, writing, puzzles, loopholes, ambiguity, WLTM very pretty, leggy female, 6ft plus, 40 plus for friendship. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415155**

PAUL early 60's, fit, smart, GSOH, WLTM female for some casual times. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415113**

MALE seeking friendship of mature woman, smoker. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412703**

ANDY young 66, widower, honest, caring, affectionate, GSOH, looking for LTR with lady 60's, slim and likeminded. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415093**

JOHN own business, blue eyes, dark hair, loving, caring, tactile, 5ft 10ins, own home, likes to wine and dine, come and meet me. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414987**

LADY companion wanted for older gent, good position in life, likes travel, property abroad etc. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414821**

FEMININE sensual female, slim-medium build wanted by slim, kind male for daytime meets, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414809**

OUTGOING male, seeking attractive female, likes sports, music, cinema and nights out. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414793**

LATE 60's male, fit, 5ft 10ins, GSOH, usual trappings, likes nice restaurants etc, slim, reliable, seeks nice lady for whatever comes. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414643**

GARETH handsome 40's pilot, strong tall build, seeks daytime discreet passion with lady 30-65. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414421**

SINGLE male, early 50's, seeking female for discreet meets, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414347**

39YR old guy, 6ft 2ins, slim-medium build, seeking female for no strings fun. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414259**

MATURE male, looking for discreet meetings with female. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 413039**

LADY companion 60-70 wanted for elderly gent, likes travel with property abroad. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414133**

AMIABLE intelligent male, 77, light smoker, seeks slim lady for friendship/companionship. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 413127**

FRANK 54, 5ft 10ins, blue eyes, blond hair, smoker, seeking friendship with mature female, 40-60. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412893**

67YR old male, slim, 5ft 5ins, many interests, likes holidays, meals out, seeking slim female 55-65 with GSOH to share TLC. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414023**

BLUE eyed male, fit, toned, likes socialising, travel, OHAC, seeks female, 40-56 for loving, caring relationship. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 413981**

MALE seeking Asian female, any age, outgoing, likes outdoors for fun times. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 413965**

KEEN cyclist 58, non-competitive, seeks similar female for sea wall, countryside ride, walking etc for fun, laughs and whatever. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 413337**

RETIRED engineer 67, likes meals out, nights in, holidays, seeking slim lady, 60-65, young at heart to wine/dine, friendship and more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 413161**

RETIRED male, seeks attractive female for friendship and fun, any age/status/colour. East Kent, can travel. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 413133**

COMPANY Director, mature, late 50's, seeking female, any age for mutually rewarding friendship, Kent/Surrey area. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412819**

IAN 5ft 11ins, likes rock/roll, singing, making people laugh, seeking someone special. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412799**

WRITER tall, slim, dark hair, generous, seeking broadminded lady for fun times. Any age/status. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412749**

BARRY divorced, 6ft, well built, seeking fun time girl for good times. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412717**

SINGLE young lady, slim-medium build, 24-38 sought by mature male in Canterbury. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 405697**

CHIPS on the pier, walks on the beach/countryside, VGSOH, 58yrs old, fit male, seeks female for laughs and love and whatever. NE Kent. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411725**

MALE 48, looking for fun loving female to enjoy outdoor activities, nights in and meals out. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 392212**

JAMES young, free and single, please give me a call if interested. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412345**

EX headmaster, tall, dark, seeks adventurous lady, status unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412263**

MALE 49, 5ft 10ins, likes cinema, reading, walks, seeks female in the Thanet area. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412235**

BESIDE the Pointe. Literate self-possessing, legginess, kindred spirit sought by white male for elevating the bar. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412223**

45YR old male, likes poetry, seeks companion for relationship. Herne Bay area. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411993**

MALE 5ft 11ins, good-looking, athletic build, looking for discreet fun times. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411477**

DEREK seeking female, 50-60 for company, friendship and have fun together. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411433**

MALE 49, attractive, fit, spontaneous, good company, no ties, seeking likeminded lady for the road ahead, nights in and out. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411309**

RAY 63, 5ft 10ins, slim, semi-retired, seeking no strings discreet meets for adult fun. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411147**

WORLD war veteran seeking happy lady with nice conversation in the Kent area. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411133**

PAUL own business, looking for daytime fun with lady. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411127**

DAVE 65, retired, N/S, likes gardening, music, meals out, holidays, seeks female. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410971**

DAVE 62, 5ft 10ins, slim, semi-retired builder, seeks no strings discreet daytime meets for adult fun. Surrey. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410899**

MALE likes outdoor life, smoker, seeking local female for cosy nights in. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410755**

BRIAN 70, Maidstone, seeking female, 60 plus, likes meals out, cinema, theatre, days out and cosy nights in. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410611**

DEREK 5ft 11ins, slim-medium build, loving, caring, seeking black lady for possible relationship. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410511**

EARLY 50's single male, smoker, seeking likeminded female for company and to share life. Must have GSOH, like animals, walks, home made food and nights in. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410441**

41YR old male, dark hair, 5ft 11ins, easy going, likes music, guitar, seeking female for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410411**

BROWN eyed white mature, handsome male, seeking black female, 18-50 for discreet no strings adult fun. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410377**

PHIL 6ft, clean shaven, blue eyes, smart, likes sports, walks, films, theatre, music, animals, GSOH, seeks female, 40-55 for fun and friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410351**

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TALENTED: The producers are excited about this year's cast

Take a magical carpet ride for panto's anniversary run

Production team promise 'biggest and best' yet as Aladdin flies into Marlowe

THE team behind this year's pantomime at the Marlowe Theatre in Canterbury is vowing to pull out all the stops to marks its tenth anniversary of staging the hugely popular show.

Aladdin opened on Friday and runs until January 11. It is traditionally one of the county's most successful productions.

Speaking to KoS this week, just a day before the show opened, director Paul Hendy was looking forward to the curtain going up.

He said: "Rehearsals have been going very well; the cast are all fantastic, and working with them so far has been great.

"This is our biggest and best panto yet - we have our strongest cast. We also have some really amazing effects - people are going to watch it, and not be able to believe their eyes."

He added: "We have a magic carpet ride, that's one of the effects.

"We also have - how should I put this without giving too much away - two brilliant large things on the stage - I can't say more than that!"

It is the tenth year Evolution Productions, the company run by Mr Hendy and his wife Emily Wood - who live near Sandwich - have created the Marlowe's annual big money spinner.

Mr Hendy says: "As it's our ten year anniversay, we wanted this to be huge.

"So far it feels like a fitting show, with the sets, effects and of course a good mix of celebrities in the cast."

Scott Maslen, who is best known as Jack Branning from EastEnders, is starring as Abanazar.

Mr Hendy says: "I think people will be really surprised by Scott.

"They've seen him in EastEnders, and he's a great actor, but here you'll also get to see a really great comic performance."

Mr Maslen played Abanazar in panto in Bournemouth last year - the same role he will be playing in Canterbury.

He said: "It was hard work, but a lot of fun. It was good being back on stage again after so many years on TV, I was keen to do another pantomime, especially a character like Abanazar – so great to get your teeth into!"

Alongside Scott Maslen will be Phil Gallagher, Mister Maker from CBeebies,playing Wishee Washee.

Mr Gallagher, who comes from Gillingham and who went to Canterbury Christ Church University, has appeared in several pantomimes and was at the Marlowe last year.

Ben Roddy and Lloyd Hollett will also be returning to the Marlowe for Aladdin; both were in Jack And The Beanstalk, last year, which was seen by more than 90,000 people. Mr Roddy will once again play the dame , this time, Widow Twankey while Mr Hollett will be PC Pongo.

The rest of the cast are: Masashi Fujimoto as Emperor of China, Sabrina Aloueche as Spirit Of The Ring, David Albury as Aladdin. Rosa O'Reilly will take on the part of Princess Jasmine and Bentley Kalu will appear as Genie of the Lamp.

Aladdin started its run at the Marlowe Theatre on November 28 and runs until to January 11 2015.

For more details, call the box office on 01227 787787, or go to www.marlowetheatre.com.

» Email us details of your event to:
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk
Tel: 01233 653476

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From Walford to Margate

BEAUTY and the Beast comes to Margate's Theatre Royal next month, with a cast includes EastEnder Ricky Groves.

It runs from December 13 - 28. Tickets cost £7.50-£48. Call 01843 292795.

Enjoy a festive fizz jaunt

HUSH Heath vineyard in Staplehurst is inviting visitors to come and sample its Christmas wines, tour the winery and learn about winemaking.

They take place on December 5-7 and 12-14. Opening times 11am – 5pm. Call 01622 832794 or visit www.hushheath.com.

Buddy bounds on stage

A TRIBUTE to Buddy Holly and the Cricketers will be playing at the Leas Clif Hall in Folkestone next month.

They will perform a mix of classic hits. Tickets cost from £16.50, call 0844 8713015.

All aboard for Santa Claus

YOU can meet Santa at Kent and East Sussex Railway in Tenterden this festive season as he visits on December 6, 7, 13, 14 and 20-24.

As well as Santa being on board, trains will be festively decorated and customers can enjoy unlimited rides on a Victorian carousel.

For tickets call 01580 765 155.

Eagle flies in to ensure Verdi's Rigoletto hits all the right notes

By Maria Chiorando

maria.chiorando@archant.co.uk

EAGLE: Kayla to star in Verdi's Rigoletto, which is based on a work by Victor Hugo

OPERA producer Ellen Kent has recruited a bird of prey for a starring role in an upcoming production.

The bald eagle, called Kayla, was recruited from the Eagle Heights Bird of Prey Centre in Eynsford and will feature in her interpretation of Verdi's classic Rigoletto which appears at the Orchard Theatre in Dartford next month.

Kayla is the guest of the celebrated Chisinau National Opera and Philharmonic show which promises a stunning traditional production recapturing the decadence of Renaissance Italy with lavish sets and opulent costumes.

Ellen Kent is no stranger to using live eagles in her productions.

She sees them as an ideal platform to remind people of the breathtaking beauty of these birds while also under-lining why they are under such threat.

Kayla's story is certainly a remarkable one.

She was stolen from the wild in Canada as a chick and raised by hand in captivity.

Later, confiscated from her captor, who was sent to prison, she was released back into the wild.

However, having been hand-raised, she had no hunting skills and therefore was reduced to stealing food.

She was caught in Winnipeg, Canada, and taken into captivity. It was thought that she would have to be put to sleep as she was too aggressive.

However Alan Ames, owner and founder of Eagle Heights, obtained a special licence to bring Kayla to the centre.

She has now been at Eagle Heights for 14 years, and is thought to be approximately 20 years old.

This will be her first appearance in an opera, however.

The show will be at Dartford's Orchard Theatre on Thursday, December 4 at 7.30pm.

For more information or to book tickets visit orchardtheatre.co.uk or call the ticket office on 01322 220000.

For more information about Eagle Heights visit eagleheights.co.uk.

ROYAL VICTORIA PLACE
TUNBRIDGE WELLS

Festive market delivers food, drink and stars

By Maria Chiorando
maria.chiorando@archant.co.uk

ELHAM's popular Christmas farmers' market returns again this year, with a host of tasty treats and entertainment lined up.

Among them will be a children's costume parade led by local actress Pam Ferris - best known for her roles in the likes of the Darling Buds of May, Luther, and Rosemary & Thyme.

She will line-up line up alongside troubadours, a raffle and lots of stalls selling local food and hand-made gifts.

The event will take place in the village's ancient square.

Food on offer includes Christmas cakes and Kentish cheese, local cider and bread, game and meat, vegetables and cobnut biscuits.

Inside the village church there will be hand-made gifts.

It is the first time the church will be used as part of the market.

Elham Food Festival and market manager Julie Woodgate said: "We're delighted that so many of our regular traders are returning once more, but we're also welcoming new traders to add to the diversity of goods.

"And I'm sure our raffle will be very popular, as the first prize is a KitchenAid food processor worth about £400 in the shops."

Throughout the market shoppers will be entertained by singing pilgrims duo Hayward and Parsons.

Julie Woodgate added: "You can't beat the quality, freshness and seasonality provided by our small-scale producers, the homemade pies, tasty cheeses and unusual meat like wild venison and pigeon.

"What's more, the event is a real community affair, run by local people, with the church doing the teas, the pub running the bar, local crafts people showing their skills and musicians providing entertainment. It should be a great day out in a beautiful setting."

Elham Christmas food festival and gift market takes place at Elham Square on December 14 at 12 until 3.30pm.

PERFICK: Local actress Pam Ferris will be at the Elham market

TREATS: Festive food and drinks will be available

Brewers' six-course feast

ALE brewers Shepherd Neame will be hosting a six-course meal on December 6.

A selection of beers will be served with each course.

Tickets cost £49.50, call 01795 532206.

A Dickensian Christmas

ROCHESTER is home to the Dickensian Christmas Festival on December 6 and 7.

There will be Victorian festivities on offer, including street entertainment, song, dance, classic readings and the chance to meet some of Dickens' fictional characters.For tickets visit www.rochesterdickensfestival.org.uk

Philarmonic's big night

THE Tonbridge Philharmonic Society will be joined by local BBC news presenter Ian Palmer for a concert at the Tonbridge School Chapel on December 18.

Tickets cost between £5-£20. Call 01732 304241.

Celebrate at the castle

LEEDS Castle will be hosting a Christmas celebration next month, from December 6-31.

The German-style market will return for its second year.

After Christmas Day, the Leeds Castle winter trail will make a comeback.

Call 01622 765400 for tickets.

Join us at Chart Hills Golf Club for Christmas

Christmas shared party Nights

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Festive Lunches

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Enjoy a lovely 3 course lunch including Christmas crackers and party packs from late November and throughout December.

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Name that show, as comic leaves it up to crowd

Comic Jason Byrne will be bringing his show with a difference to Canterbury theatre next month

COMEDIAN Jason Byrne will be bringing his stand-up tour 'You Name The Show' to the Gulbenkian in Canterbury on December 4.

He has taken an unorthodox approach to naming the show - each year he has to think up a title. This year, he is handing the power back to the people and is asking his audience to name the show for him.

Over the course of the tour, the best name will win £500, there will be a leader board on stage each night and by the end of the tour the show will have a name.

Each night he will select a handful of audience members and give each one a white board to write down what they think the show should be called. At the end of the show, the entire audience will vote on which name is the best and the winning name will take place centre stage on the white leader board.

At the end of the tour, Mr Byrne and his final audience will choose the winning name, but it's generally not suitable for children.

He says: "They always, without fail, come up with something with swear words in it. I get some interesting crowds - and they are never the same twice.

"I swear there's something following me around, making each audience group totally different. There's always something going on, in Cambridge for example, we had a wedding proposal on stage. I get really nervous with stuff like that - I'm just waiting for it and hoping it doesn't go wrong!"

YOUR CALL: Jason Byrne hits the road with his new stand-up show

The live show isn't his only project at the moment - he is currently recording a new TV series, Snaptastic.

He has featured on Live at the Apollo, the Royal Variety Show, The Jason Byrne Show and Father Figure of which he is the creator and star.

He enjoys all the different strands of performance, though they are all unique. He says: "Live shows and television are two very different things, it's like comparing a motorbike and a car. Live, there are no cameras, so you don't have that pressure, or strict schedule.

"I guess it's like live is this motorbike, and television is a really expensive Rolls Royce - you can't break anything on it."

He enjoys interacting with the audience at his shows.

He says: "My crowd know me and know what I can do. It's just my style of comedy and the way my brain works - it's like a child's brain.

"My thing is that when people come to my show they always go back home and bring their friends and family back with them next time.

"That's because there's always something in my shows for everyone. From 16 year olds to their grandfathers, they all enjoy it."

You Name The Show is at the Gulbenkian in Canterbury on December 4. Tickets cost £17.50, call 01227 769075. Not suitable for under 16s.

Panto set for the Angel

TONBRIDGE Lions and the Angel Centre host the pantomime Robin Hood and the Babes in the Wood.

Performances take place on December 19 at 7.30pm and December 20 at 10.30am, 2.30pm and 6.30pm.

Tickets cost £12 for adults, £10 for children/concessions and £35 for a family ticket. Contact the Angel Centre box office on 01732 359966.

Juniors in good voice

JUNIOR singers will celebrate Christmas in song with a festive concert at All Saints Church, Mill Street, Maidstone on December 13. Kent County Junior Singers (KCJS) and Kent County Junior Choir (KCJC) draw members from across the county.

Tickets, priced at £8 (£5 concessions), are available on the door and the audience is invited to sing along with traditional carols in the historic 14th century building.

Jimmy's back for more

COMEDIAN Jimmy Carr has added an extra date to his Funny Business tour.

He will play the Assembly Hall Theatre in Tunbridge Wells on December 17 at 8pm.

Tickets cost £25 and a £1.25 per ticket booking fee will be added to all orders booked online or through the box office.

Call the box office on 01892 530613 or visit www.assemblyhalltheatre.co.uk.

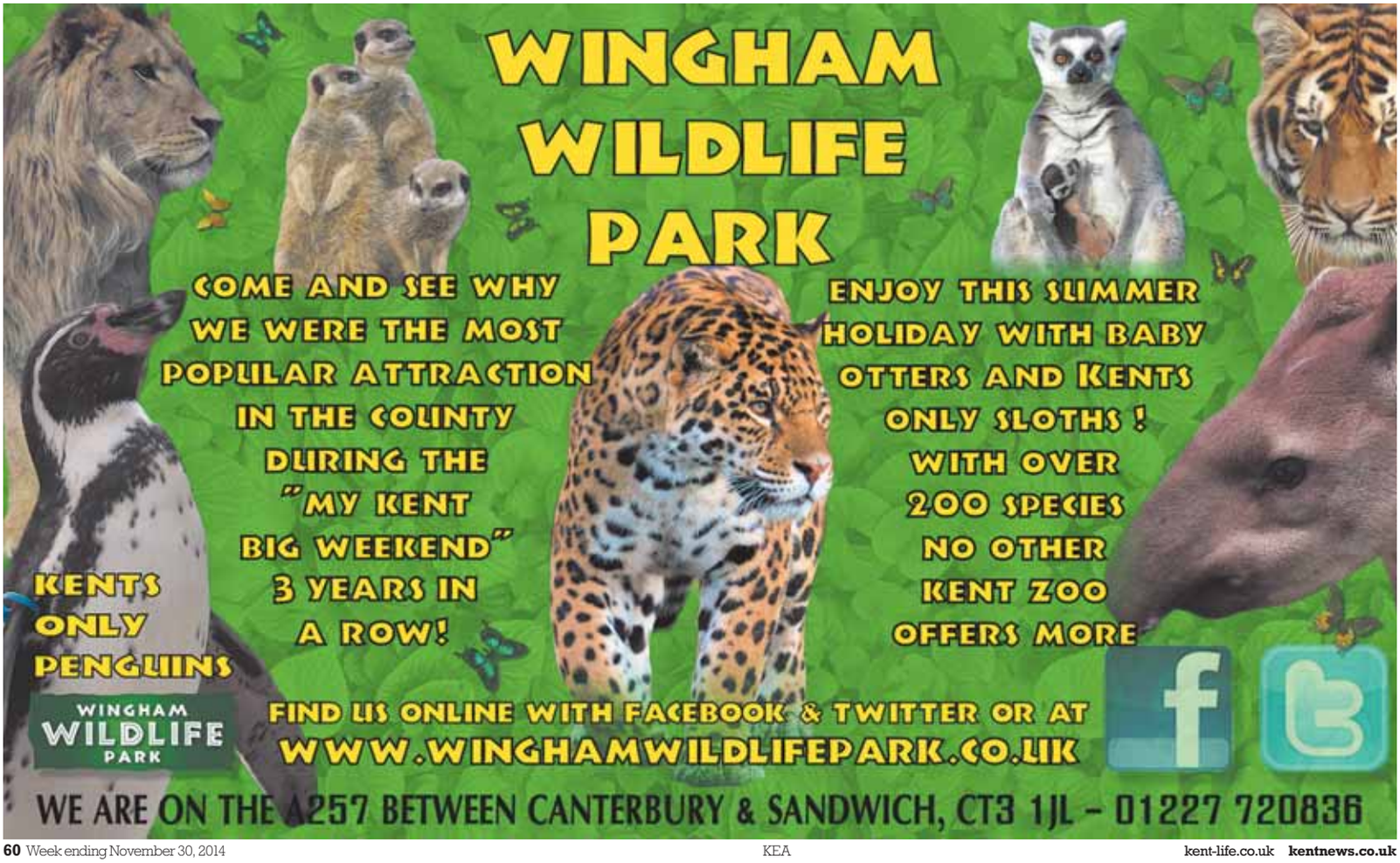
This show is not suitable for under 16s.

Miles Jupp in Margate

MILES Jupp will be recording his new live DVD during a performance at Margate's Theatre Royal on February 15.

He is a regular panellist on BBC Radio 4's The News Quiz, Have I Got News For You and Mock The Week and he plays Nigel in Rev and John Duggan in The Thick Of It on BBC2.

Tickets cost £15 £13 concs. Call 01843 292795 or visit www.theatreroyalmargate.com.



By Kate Whiting
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

STRESS: Expectant father James Ramsden (left) says a bit of forward planning can make all the difference to your Christmas Day catering this year.

Plan, don't panic, this Yuletide

Food writer and cook James Ramsden may have an extra special guest at Christmas this year, as his first baby with wife Rosie is due on December 20.

"We're going to play it by ear - if he happens to be early, then we might go up to my parents in Yorkshire for Christmas, but as things stand, we'll be here in London," he says, smiling broadly.

Ramsden, a 29 year old food blogger, who ran trendy supper club The Secret Larder, is having quite a year.

When we speak, he's caught between moving into a new a house (babies need a lot of space) and promoting his new cookbook, Do-Ahead Christmas.

In it, he unpacks his philosophy of preparing well in advance, to make the festive season - Christmas Day in particular - as stress-free as possible.

And with a new baby on the way, Ramsden will definitely be practising what he preaches.

"Apart from the big-ticket items like the turkey, the majority can be done ahead," he says.

"The sweet stuff and all the little bits and pieces that are not necessarily essential - they're the things to get done well in advance and chuck in the freezer.

"And there's a lot you can do on Christmas Eve and in the week running up to Christmas, so it means that you can actually enjoy Christmas Day.

"It sounds kind of trite and idealistic, but it's really not, and that's how I've operated forever . It means you sit down and have a nice time, as opposed to hiding in the kitchen - and everyone else can have a nice time because you're not in a flap!"

Ramsden, who inherited his Norwegian-American grandmother's cookery books, is a big fan of the freezer - with everything from mince pies, pfefferkuchen and stollen, to meatballs, clumps of spinach and emergency shepherd's pies stocking up his this winter.

He plunders his stash and warms things up as he goes: "We're obsessed with things being fresh, but actually, as long as your ingredients are good and you've cooked it well, it doesn't matter if it's been done ahead, you can reheat it."

Christmas lunch, he believes, is "one of those meals that people pile stress on when, actually, you're doing a turkey and a few sides.

"People get their knickers in a twist about Christmas in a way they don't about other family meals, which is a shame, because it should just be about having a lovely time.

"I'd much rather have a so-so dinner and a relaxed host, as opposed to them being in a complete state and the food's wonderful," he adds.

Ramsden says: "All you have to do is the main thing, the turkey or whatever it might be, roast some potatoes and then heat everything up - and it tastes every bit as good.

"Then have a nice time!"

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Learn 'mochi' more about Japan

TRAVEL REVIEW: Japan

By Kate Hodal

WELCOMING: many westerners find Japan impenetrable, but it is a remarkable place

THERE'S a Japanese proverb that warns: "The nail that sticks out gets hammered down." And it's this phrase I'm thinking of as I trip over an ancient spike on a thousand-year-old pilgrim path in Japan's emerald Kii Mountains.

Hiking along the ancient Kumano Kodo trail, the rusty spike is my introduction to Japan's 'abode of the gods', a region considered so sacred that everyone from Edo emperors, to contemporary octogenarians, has graced its mountain paths.

It's one of only two pilgrimages in the whole world with UNESCO world-heritage status and its cultural significance shouldn't be overlooked.

Japan can sometimes seem overwhelmingly impenetrable to Western visitors, but the nation's staggering beauty, delicious cuisine, and opportunity to step both back and forward in time, is truly a rare treat.

We begin our trip in Tokyo, at one of the capital's newest and most chic hotel additions to the skyline.

Tokyo wouldn't be Tokyo without a trip to some of its wackier destinations, so we spend a day in Shibuya, hobnobbing with Japanese teens dressed as Victorian dolls, then head to the nation's only 'goat cafe', where the two resident beasts stare curiously as we sip our bubble tea.

We end the evening at the Robot Restaurant - it's a mad futuristic mix of kabuki theatre, Japanese anime, Liberace sequins and retro Vegas decor - the best fun I've had out in ages.

After a few days in the city, it's time to seek some spiritual salvation, so we take a bullet train to Osaka, and connect to another train to Tanabe city in the Kii peninsula, to start our Kumano Kodo hike.

Our five-day, 25-mile (40km) trek follows one of the most popular routes, starting at Takijiri-oji (just a short drive from Tanabe) and ending at the waterfall shrine in Kumano Nachi Taisha.

While much of the Kumano Kodo is accessible by car or bus, our goal is to take in as much as possible by hiking, while sleeping in traditional ryokan (Japanese inns) and minshuku (family-run guesthouses).

We hike along dappled paths by day and at night, exhausted, are treated to eight-course kaiseki dinners by our kind hosts-cum-chefs, gorging on a splendid mix of freshly prepared sushi, locally grown vegetables and home-made soba noodles.

These days, it's mostly foreigners who engage in the longer treks that can take anywhere from four to 14 days, depending on the route, ambition and amount of time one has.

The Japanese prefer weekends or day-long hikes, simply because of their long working hours, says Tanabe city's Kumano tourism manager Brad Towle.

"The Japanese consider these shrines 'power spots' where they can recharge with good energy," he says, as we begin our steep hike up into the mountains, a cushion of cypress leaves at our feet.

The final leg of our journey is an ancient one, as we travel like pilgrims on a traditional boat along the turquoise Kumano river. When we arrive at the spectacular Kumano Nachi Taisha shrine, set against a 133m-long waterfall cascading over a huge granite and cypress outcrop, hundreds of locals have gathered to pray to the "mother goddess", asking for help trying to conceive or to bless newly pregnant women.

As I take in the scene around me, one of the Shinto priests comes over to offer prayer 'tips'. "You must pray with your full name and address so that the goddess can find you and deliver your wish," she tells me with a knowing smile.

So, despite the raised eyebrows from my partner, I do what the locals do: I throw a gold coin into the box, ring the big bell, bow twice, clap twice, tell the goddess my prayer (along with my address, quietly wondering if she delivers internationally), and bow again. Our trekking friend Shizu makes a separate prayer for me and claps delightedly with hope.

Let's just say the Japanese have their rules for a reason: if you follow instructions, sometimes you're lucky enough to get what you're looking - or praying - for.

TRAVEL FACTS

KATE Hodal was a guest of Inside Japan Tours (www.insidejapantours.com).

Their 14-night Pilgrims Paths self-guided tour costs from £1,860pp including accommodation, most transport, a number of evening meals, airport transfers, private guiding for one day in Tokyo, Kyoto, Mt. Koya and on the Kumano Kodo.

Rooms at the Andaz Tokyo cost from £380pp, including breakfast.

Film Reviews

Paddington
(PG, 95 mins) Family/Adventure/Comedy

MORE than 50 years after he first appeared in print, author Michael Bond's beloved bear Paddington has finally arrived on the big screen in his first star-packed family adventure.Director Paul King's film lovingly weaves the traditional tenets of the duffel-coat wearing bear's story into a modern narrative.

In their youth, Lucy and Pastuzo were visited by a kindly English explorer who left his red hat with his furry friends.

When their home is threatened, Aunt Lucy packs her nephew off to the safety of London to track down the explorer, who has promised that there will always be a home for them in the capital.

As comforting and sweet as Paddington's beloved marmalade, this adaptation has heaps of heart and enough humour and carefully plotted cameos to ensure everyone more than grins and bears his adaptation.

Rating 7.5/10

Horrible Bosses 2
(15, 59 mins) Comedy/Romance

RELEASED in 2011, Horrible Bosses centred on three friends, who plotted to kill their sadistic employers and found self-respect in the process.

Sean Anders' raunchy sequel flings that self-respect out of the window and subjects the same unfortunate characters to a barrage of potty-mouthed humiliations that might be tolerable if we could muster an iota of sympathy for anyone in this redundant and joyless mess.

Alas, the lumbering script, scrawled by Anders and John Morris, has its mind in the gutter. Horrible Bosses 2 doesn't work on any level, with the different performance styles between the actors jarring. The filmmakers threw millions at this film and have created a poor excuse for a comedy.

Rating 4/10

I am Ali
(PG, 111 mins)

MUHAMMED Ali gained fame and notoriety for his antics inside and out of the ring, including his vociferous objection to American involvement in the Vietnam War, which resulted in the loss of his heavyweight boxing title.

Documentary filmmaker Clare Lewins delivers an intimate and revealing portrait of Cassius Marcellus Clay, Jr,.

It tracks his formative years to his rise as a counter-cultural figure and international celebrity.

His daughter Maryum, has fully endorsed the work as ''the best film about my father.''

Rating 9/10

By Hannah Stephenson
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

TREES: Now is a good time to start thinking about what to plant for the year ahead.

Leafing through winter's tree choices

THERE's no better time to plant trees and conifers, particularly bare-root ones, when the plants are dormant but the soil is still warm enough for the roots to become established before spring.

So if you're planting a tree during National Tree Week, which runs from November 29 to December 7, consider firstly your situation and how much space you have.

Trees can create privacy, shade, dramatic impact, colour and fruit, as well as movement and architectural form.

The height and structure of the types you choose are as important in a small garden as they are in a large one.

If you have a small space, consider choosing a narrow tree with minimal spread, which will provide height and structure.

Alternatively, you may prefer one landmark spreading tree with a canopy which casts dappled shade but allows for some planting underneath. Compact 'weeping' trees, such as a weeping pear (Pyrus salicifolia) could be used as a focal point.

If your space is really limited, you could plant a carefully trimmed tree in a large pot.

Excellent trees for small gardens include Amelanchier lamarckii, whose graceful branches carry copper-hued new leaves in spring along with starry, white flowers. In autumn the leaves often colour brilliantly too.

If you have room for two trees, try to combine two trees which have a different season of interest.

A good example of this is a photinia - an evergreen with new red growth in late spring - and sorbus, which has lovely autumn hues and dazzling berries.

If you are looking for flowers, consider one of the crab apple varieties, such as Malus floribunda, the Japanese crab, which is adorned with blush pink and white fragrant flowers in spring and is slow growing.

You might also look at the Malus 'Royal Beauty', which bears deep red-purple flowers and small dark red fruits.

Among the most suitable flowering trees for a confined space is the Prunus 'Amanogawa',

This is an upright specimen with ascending branches which produces fragrant pink flowers in mid-spring.

If you only have room for a pot, you could consider a Japanese maple.

This will produce fantastic foliage colour, or a trimmed bay, photinia or olive tree.

Bigger gardens offer more scope to house much larger trees.

Good examples are majestic oaks, horse chestnuts and lime trees. Just be aware of their impact on your views long-term because you don't want them to screen your vista of the countryside.

The Tree Council's National Tree Week runs from November 29 - December 7.

For more information, visit www.treecouncil.org.uk.

feedback

your say...

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Don't go back to the Dark Ages

IT IS unbelievable that there are people who still wish to chase a helpless animal and see it torn to pieces for sport.

Yes, The Hunting Act 2004 is weak, with the then Labour Government who brought it in, appeasing the Countryside Alliance by permitting loopholes that cause suffering to the hunted animals, whilst attempting to meet the wishes of the majority of the public who wanted a ban on bloodsports.

Imagine if the laws that abolished slavery and child labour had been repealed, would we still have these abominations?

There were many people who were opposed to ending slavery and child labour. Similar arguments were put forward, such as jobs would be lost and the economy would suffer.

The loopholes of the Hunting Act 2004 need to be closed and the Act made more effective.

Hunting with hounds is not indicative of a civilised society and is as debasing to humans as it is cruel to our wildlife.

Therefore, to the majority, a repeal of the Hunting Act 2004 would be a giant step back to the Dark Ages.

Vivien Clifford,
Deal

Get focus off the fox hunting ban

OF ALL the things in the world to get het up over, surely the chasing of half a dozen foxes in the countryside should be pretty low down?

What about famine, terrorism, the economy, unemployment, the NHS - in fact pretty much everything else.

Yes, fox hunting is a cruel 'sport' but our Government should be focusing on the main issues not considering this one again.

T Jones,
Tunbridge Wells

Where's my cash back then KCC?

CAN readers please tell me where I can obtain a form to claim back money from the KCC?

Our road, has the lights switched off at 1am, as part of the cut-back trial being carried out by the KCC.

The thing is, I am still paying the same as friends in the next road, who have their lights on all night.

I am paying for the same service but the service is not delivered.

It's a bit like paying your bus fare to the terminus and then being told to get off two stops before.

Whilst there may be a cut back for the KCC – they are not paying for the electricity for our lights – I am still paying for it!

If KCC has difficulty in managing the county, they should take it up with government.

In the meantime, how do I apply for a refund?

Mike Bassett,
Rusthall

LETTER OF THE WEEK

'Hero' campaigners fighting for kindness

IS THE hunting ban working? (KoS, last week). I doubt it.

However, I am far more concerned about live animal exports, vivisection, factory farming, conditions in slaughter houses and puppy farming, to name but a few.

The list is endless and it represents deliberately inflicted animal cruelty on a vast, terrible scale.

Money, as usual, features strongly. The root of all evil.

What can be done to put an end to all this misery? Sadly, there is no easy answer, but following one's conscience is a good starting point. All contributions gratefully received.

The wonderful people who work tirelessly to stop live exports are a prime example to all of us. Unsung heroes in their own right.

In the final analysis, patience will be rewarded. It has to be.

Christmas is approaching at speed. Animals play an important part in the birth of the holy babe, illustrating gentleness, simplicity and peace. The message is loud and clear, but it falls on deaf ears much of the time.

If mankind will not show compassion in this direction, then it is a poor lookout for the human species.

I am standing by for the flak.

Mary McNulty
Brenchley

Let's tackle the language barrier

AT LAST, a letter (albeit the last and brief one) from H E Bassett of New Romney (KoS, last week), asking why there doesn't appear to be a 'th' in the Kent dialect.

My response to that is, it is not dialect, but the result of slovenly speech.

The way many speak our language now is atrocious.

Indeed, 'nothing' pronounced as 'nuffing' is nothing compared to the prevalence of the words 'you know', with which numerous people these days litter their conversations; and if we didn't have the word 'like' in the English language, a countless number of people would be incapable of having any intercourse at all.

I 'was like' this. I 'was like' that. When I hear it, (all too often these days) out of politeness, I restrain myself from asking if they actually had the experience they're describing, or something similar.

Another mistake, frequently heard, is the use of the word 'was', instead of 'were'. "I heard you singing. I thought you 'was' great".

It grates on me every time I hear the Manfred Mann song that includes the line, "I knew we 'was' falling in love". Perhaps there are some out there reading this, saying, "What's wrong with that?". Maybe it's just me who finds it irritating.

Another example is the now long-running advertisement on TV where the one of the big supermarket chains (that claims to be the cheapest) uses the word 'comparable' and pronounces it as 'comparable'.

No matter if they are the cheapest, I will never purchase anything from a supermarket whose management is prepared to allow such a mispronunciation to be broadcast in its name. They should know that the correct pronunciation is: 'com-prabul'.

Perhaps they think the former gives them more 'street-cred', when in reality it perpetuates ignorance of the correct way to pronounce the word.

Such slovenly speech is now also very common with the written word: 'Your', instead of 'you're'. Or use of the word 'of', instead of 've, as the abbreviation of the word 'have'.

The list of such is increasing with every passing day.

Of course language is a dynamic thing, changing all the time, but there are some basic rules that never change and they should be taught to children by the way we converse with them and as they learn through formal education.

Sadly, there are now so many adults who speak in a slovenly manner, it seems firmly entrenched into everyday life, so I cannot see it doing anything but getting continually worse.

Christopher Hudson-Gool,
Maidstone

Churchill would not like the EU

YOUR correspondent, David Boston, in his letter, 'Let us not forget power of unity', is surely not suggesting that Winston Churchill would have approved of Britain being a member of the European Union?

When the idea of a Common Market came about, Churchill stated, 'We should be linked to Europe; not absorbed'.

It would have been utterly abhorrent to him that we would become so absorbed in Europe that we would forfeit our sovereignty.

I am not a one party person. I have voted for all three of the major parties in turn.

But objectively it is clear to me that if I want the opportunity to vote on an 'In-Out' referendum on Europe I have only one choice, and that is to vote for the party which Winston led.

What other choice have I?

It is the only party that has a realistic chance of being elected with that vote in its manifesto.

MH Wise,
Canterbury

Looking forward to the white stuff?

IS anyone else dreading the arrival of the white stuff and its far-reaching effects on all our lives?

Every winter those few flakes that settle manage to bring the county to a standstill by, for example, blocking our roads and closing our schools. I'll get me shovel...

H Bell,
Maidstone

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Sunset at Westgate

by **Mark Maltwood, Broadstairs**

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driving

By Steve Loader
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

CORSA FIVE-DOOR: Left, Vauxhall's supermini looks more grown up, new dash above and sport version below. Bottom of the page, the increasingly popular and refined Insignia model, one of the marque's big hitters

Vauxhall shaping up for another crack at the top

IS VAUXHALL a mainstream premium brand? Well, it hasn't achieved the latter state yet and the marque's griffin or wyvern badge is not yet coveted like that of BMW or Audi, but there are definite signs of a move upmarket.

As with rivals like Ford and Peugeot, the General Motors brand wants to rise above the price and volume pressures of the low to mid market before it is swamped by yet more cheap and cheerful imports, notably from China.

That's not easy when your traditional business is founded on pile 'em high, sell 'em cheap fleet or company car business; commonplace models don't tend to attract a premium reputation.

But Vauxhall's upmarket ambition is working, backed by better looking cars and classier, well-equipped cabins: secondhand values are climbing, led by the Mokka crossover/SUV, quirky Adam city car, and stylish Insignia and Astra family models.

This feel good factor has been helped by the Corsa - old and new. As final stocks of the current car were sold off, demand remained strong and the new model should make the handover seamless, especially as Vauxhall has opted for an evolution rather than revolution approach to the new generation car. This tactic is not always exciting, but when you seem to have a winning combination - backed by a consistent top five position in the UK sales charts - you can be forgiven for adopting the old adage 'don't fix it, if it ain't broke'.

So the new Corsa looks reminiscent of the old car and delivers everything it offered, only better.

It also has an all-new engine option worth shouting about: the new three-cylinder turbo petrol unit is a revelation, offering four-cylinder smoothness and response without the weight or fuel consumption.

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Juke still a hit with its 'Marmite' shape

You either love it or hate it, but there's no denying the Nissan's 'baby crossover', the Juke is still flying out of the showrooms...and now it's been given a freshen up

Nissan Juke

1.5 dCi Tekna

Price: **from £19,065**

Driving appeal:	★★★★
Image:	★★★★
Space:	★★★
Value:	★★★★
Running costs:	★★★★★
How green?:	★★★★
Best rival:	**Alfa Romeo MiTo**

No car polarises opinion more than the Nissan Juke, but there is no doubting its success for the brand and the UK - it is produced at Nissan's busy Sunderland plant and has been a major motor export.

It was designed as a junior partner to the hugely popular Qashqai, launched in 2007 and credited with creating the crossover sector - part people carrier, part SUV and part family hatch.

But when the Juke arrived in 2010, it was clear that success had gone to the heads of Nissan's designers: the car looked like a bulldog and the raked roof line ate into rear headroom.

But a flood of buyers loved it for all that, plus its high driving position and choice of front-wheel drive and 4x4.

Nissan even launched a hot version, the Nismo, in 2012 to bring a halo to the line-up with its turbocharged 197bhp 1.6-litre engine.

And Nissan has now given a midlife facelift to its 'enfant terrible' to make it even funkier. New lights front and back add to the pugnacious stance, while a sportier cabin addresses comments that the interior never quite matched the impact of the exterior.

'BULLDOG': Some call it aggressive, others call it sweet...Nissan is coining it in as the British-built Juke builds on the success of its big brother the Qashqai in terms of its popularity with car buyers

With one eye on the success of those retro rivals, the MINI and Fiat 500, Nissan has also given free reign to customisation, with some particularly sharp looking alloys in the mix.

Priced from a competitive £13,420, the level of standard kit is generous anyway: the line-up opens with the 93bhp non-turbo 1.6-litre petrol Visia model, and this comes with 16-inch alloys, air con, all electric windows, tyre pressure monitoring and daytime running lights.

On a practical note, Nissan has extracted a much-needed 40 per cent increase in luggage capacity on front-wheel drive only versions; just as well, because the major failing of the design is the modest cabin size, but at least it is a better load lugger this time round.

A new turbocharged 113bhp 1.2-litre DIG-T petrol engine is an interesting new powertrain option; it's lively yet economical if you don't abuse the boost, and costs £1,400 less than the equivalent diesel.

But we tested what is still widely regarded as the best choice: the 110PS (108bhp) 1.5-litre diesel version, which is smooth, lively and economical - 70.6mpg on the official combined cycle. With low emissions of 104g/km of CO_2, it will also cost you just £20/year in road tax after a freebie first year, but check out that DIG-T equivalent if you don't cover many miles, as you'll never get the diesel's extra outlay back in fuel savings.

Whatever your miles though, you will enjoy the Juke's point-and-shoot handling, even if its high body does make it lean a bit during hard cornering.

Motability

Buyer's guide

Motability's liberating influence

Scheme helps fund and adapt a vehicle for the use of those with disabilities

MOTABILITY has radically changed the way disabled people and their families live their lives.

The Government-backed scheme enables them to get on the road for much less than it would cost them to buy or lease a new, or nearly new, car privately and helps them with potentially costly adaptations for controls or wheelchair access.

On top of that, the scheme's regular payments can take care of everyday running costs, from insurance, maintenance and repairs, to breakdown assistance – a huge reassurance when the cost of motoring is soaring.

What is more, Motability does not insist that the disabled person is the driver; the car is made available for the benefit of that person, which means that up to two other named drivers can be on the car's insurance cover instead of the disabled person.

For more about this liberating scheme for disabled people, see inside this special supplement.

FLEXIBLE: Motability buyers have the same range of choices as any able-bodied person, from the style of the latest Skoda Octavia hatchback to a funky MPV holdall like the Fiat 500L

Motability
The leading car scheme for disabled people

TOYOTA MOTABILITY.
ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS DRIVE.

AURIS ICON
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To arrange a test drive contact us at:

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The Crescent, Ashford
Tel: 0844 822 7122

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Broad Oak Road, Canterbury
Tel: 0844 822 7130

Motorline Tunbridge Wells
Dowding Way, Tunbridge Wells
Tel: 0844 822 7169

motorline.toyota.co.uk

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AYGO X-PRESSION
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YARIS ICON
NIL ADVANCE PAYMENT

AURIS TOURING SPORTS
FROM £199 ADVANCE PAYMENT

7 SEAT VERSO
FROM £495 ADVANCE PAYMENT

RAV4 ICON 2WD
£1,995 ADVANCE PAYMENT

Models shown in order are Auris Icon 1.33 Manual at NIL Advance Payment, AYGO x-pression 5 door 1.0 VVT-i Manual at NIL Advance Payment, Yaris Icon 5 door 1.0 VVT-i at NIL Advance Payment, Auris Touring Sports Icon 1.33 at £645 Advance Payment, Verso Icon 1.6 D-4D Manual at £1,145 Advance Payment and RAV4 Icon 2WD 2.0d Manual at £1,995 Advance Payment. Subject to availability. Please note that 20,000 miles per year are allowed on the Motability Contract Hire Scheme. Offer valid between 1st October and 31st December 2014. Available as part of the Motability Contract Hire Scheme.

Auris Icon 1.33 Manual. Official Fuel Consumption Figures in mpg (l/100km): Urban 40.4 (7.0), Extra Urban 60.1 (4.7), Combined 51.4 (5.5). CO_2 Emissions 128g/km. AYGO x-pression 3 door 1.0 VVT-i Manual. Official Fuel Consumption Figures in mpg (l/100km): Urban 56.5 (5.0), Extra Urban 78.5 (3.6), Combined 68.9 (4.1). CO_2 Emissions 95g/km. Yaris Icon 1.0 VVT-i Manual. Official Fuel Consumption Figures in mpg (l/100km): Urban 54.3 (5.2), Extra Urban 74.3 (3.8), Combined 65.7 (4.3). CO_2 Emissions 99g/km. Auris Touring Sports Icon 1.33 Manual. Official Fuel Consumption Figures in mpg (l/100km): Urban 39.8 (7.1), Extra Urban 58.9 (4.8),Combined 50.4 (5.6). CO_2 Emissions 130g/km. Verso Icon 1.6 D-4D 6-speed Manual. Official Fuel Consumption Figures in mpg (l/100km): Urban 51.4 (5.5), Extra Urban 72.3 (3.9), Combined 62.8 (4.5). CO_2 Emissions 119g/km. RAV4 Icon 2WD 2.0d Manual. Official Fuel Consumption figures in mpg (l/100km): Urban 49.6 (5.7), Extra Urban 62.8 (4.5), Combined 57.6 (4.9). CO_2 Emissions 127g/km. The mpg figures quoted are sourced from official EU-regulated test results. These are provided for comparability purposes and may not reflect your actual driving experience.

Evolution of a scheme adopted by millions

How Motability allowed users and their drivers to choose the right car for them

TRANSPORT aid for the disabled used to be limited strictly to those who could drive themselves.

And this was usually in the form of a notoriously unstable three-wheeler with room for the driver only - not much use for families – and a tendency to tip over on corners or in high winds.

That changed with the launch of the Government-backed Motability charity in 1978, which calculated an allowance that disabled people could use towards a vehicle of their choice.

It removed the stigma of the blue 'Invacar' – finally outlawed from UK roads in 2003 - and also opened up transport to disabled people who couldn't drive themselves.

Since then, more than three million cars, scooters and powered wheelchairs have been sourced through Motability, allowing disabled people to go shopping, do voluntary work, visit friends, go to the doctor, do sport, give a family member a lift, or go on holiday – all things the motoring majority takes for granted.

Some users have even been able to take up further education or pursue better jobs and careers, having been liberated by their new mobility. The scheme was modified recently though, to streamline procedures and prevent misuse creeping into the system (see box on the right for details).

SPACE OR PACE: Invacar users would have been amazed that they could have cars like the capacious yet compact Fiat Qubo (bottom right), upmarket Volvo V40 (above) or sporty Alfa Romeo Giulietta (top right).

The key changes were:

- Streamlining the list of cars available.
- Nominated drivers must live at or within five miles of the applicant's address, though special circumstances will be considered.
- Drivers under 25 are restricted to cars with an insurance group of 16 or lower and with a power output of 115bhp or less.
- Drivers under 21 are only permitted to drive Motability vehicles in cases where they live with the disabled customer.

HONDA
The Power of Dreams

The Honda range, available from Nil Advance Payment

CR-V from £999 Advance Payment.

Civic from Nil Advance Payment.

Civic Tourer from £499 Advance Payment.

Jazz from Nil Advance Payment.

BARRETTS HONDA
Vauxhall Road, Canterbury, Kent CT1 1YY
Call 01227 866266 or visit www.barrettshonda.co.uk

Fuel consumption figures for the Honda range in mpg (l/100km): Urban Cycle 23.2 – 70.6 (12.2 – 4.0), Extra Urban 40.4 – 85.6 (7.0 – 3.3), Combined 32.5 – 78.5 (8.7 – 3.6). CO_2 emissions 201 – 94g/km. Fuel consumption figures sourced from official EU-regulated laboratory test results, are provided for comparison purposes and may not reflect real-life driving experience.

Models Shown: Jazz 1.4 i-VTEC ES Plus Manual in Milano Red Non-Metallic, Civic 1.4 i-VTEC S Manual in Milano Red Non-Metallic, Civic Tourer 1.8 i-VTEC S Manual in Milano Red Non-Metallic and CR-V 2.0 i-VTEC S Manual 2WD in optional Passion Red Pearl. Terms and Conditions: Nil Advanced Payment offer on Jazz 1.4 i-VTEC ES Plus Manual and Civic 1.4 i-VTEC S Manual, £499 Advanced Payment offer on Civic Tourer 1.8 i-VTEC S Manual, £999 Advanced Payment offer on CR-V 2.0 i-VTEC S Manual 2WD. All offers are correct at the time of going to print however Honda (UK) reserves the right to change this offer at any time. Models subject to availability. Written details available on request. The facilities offered are for the hire of goods. The scheme is available to recipients of the Higher Rate Mobility Component of the Disability Living Allowance or War Pensioners Mobility Supplement. To qualify for this offer you must be in receipt of a minimum of 12 months allowance. Valid for applications between 1 October 2014 to 31 December 2014 to Motability Operations Limited (Registered Company No. 1373876), City Gate House, 22 Southwark Bridge Road, London SE1 9HB. Promoter is Honda Motor Europe Limited trading as Honda (UK) at 470 London Road, Slough, Berkshire SL3 8QY. (Registered Company No. 1373876), City Gate House, 22 Southwark Bridge Road, London SE1 9HB.

Motability offers you the ability to enjoy worry-free motoring

Breakdown cover and insurance included

A new car every 3 years

To find out how Motability can help you, talk to our specialist today.

Motability
The leading car scheme for disabled people

Fiat with EXPO MILANO 2015

MEET THE EXTENDED FAMILY

FIAT 500L MPW

- 7 seats option‡
- 632 litre boot^

FIAT 500L

- 5 seats
- 400 litre boot^
- 22 storage compartments

FIAT 500L TREKKING

- Traction +
- City Brake Control
- Bold bumpers & side mouldings

THE FIAT 500L RANGE FROM NIL ADVANCE PAYMENT*

Motability

For further information or for a complete list of Fiat cars offered on the Motability Scheme, please call Northgate Canterbury on 01227 828200.

500L

FIAT

NORTHGATE CANTERBURY, 1 WESTMINSTER ROAD, CANTERBURY, KENT CT1 1YY.
TEL: 01227 828200 WWW.NORTHGATE-GROUP.CO.UK

Fuel consumption figures for the Fiat 500L range in mpg (l/100km): Urban 30.4 (9.3) – 62.8 (4.5); Extra Urban 49.6 (5.7) – 76.3 (3.7); Combined 40.4 (7.0) – 70.6 (4.0). CO_2 emissions 163 – 105 g/km. Fuel consumption and CO_2 figures based on standard EU tests for comparative purposes and may not reflect real driving results. ^Vehicles shown are Fiat 500L 1.4 Pop Star, Fiat 500L 1.3 MultiJet 85 Trekking with optional Bicolour paint at additional cost and Fiat 500L 1.4 MPW Lounge with Advance Payment of £95 with optional Bicolour paint at additional cost. ^The Fiat 500L and Fiat 500L MPW boot space is based on 5 seat version with rear seats pulled forward. ‡Based on 5+2 seat version. 5 standard seats and two extra seats for persons up to 1.65m. Advance Payments are correct at time of going to press and subject to orders being placed between 1st October – 31st December 2014. Not available in conjunction with any other offer. Terms & Conditions apply. Offer may be varied and withdrawn at any time.

So who can drive a Motability car?

Scheme includes many special adaptations to help disabled with steering, seating, safety and stowage

MOTABILITY MOBILITY STARS: The smart and capacious Toyota Verso (above), compact Skoda Citigo (above left) and no-nonsense Fiat Panda

Motability is a worry-free package that includes:

- A choice of around 2,000 car models.
- Insurance, servicing and maintenance.
- RAC breakdown assistance
- Road tax.
- Tyre and windscreen replacement.
- 60,000 mileage allowance over 3 years.

UP to two nominated drivers can drive a Motability vehicle, but the disabled person qualifying for the scheme does not have to be one of them.

The drivers may be friends or relatives, and parents or carers can apply on behalf of a child aged three or older. The car only has to be used for the benefit of the disabled person, such as a shopping trip or collecting a prescription – they don't even have to be in the car. A third insured driver can be added for a small payment.

If you receive the Higher Rate Mobility Component of the Disability Living Allowance or the War Pensioners' Mobility Supplement, you can apply for a Motability lease by exchanging part or all of that allowance.

Car dimensions vary: seat height, door opening angle and storage space for wheelchairs and equipment can all affect whether the car works for you and your particular disability or not, but your local dealer can take you through a questionnaire designed to ensure the car and Motability is right for you.

Many special adaptations are available free to help with speed and steering, signalling and safety, stowage, and seating and access.

The Motability package continues to the end of your three-year lease, with a seamless transfer to your new car. Around 600,000 customers currently choose Motability and 97 per cent say they would recommend the scheme to their friends.

renault.co.uk

DESIGNED FOR MOTABILITY

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Motability

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TEL 0844 822 7100

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WWW.MOTORLINE.CO.UK/RENAULT

BOOK A TEST DRIVE

RENAULT

The official fuel consumption figures in mpg (l/100km) for the cars shown are: urban 68.9 (4.1)–76.4 (3.7); extra-urban 62.8 (4.5)–67.26 (4.2); combined 72.4 (3.9)–83.1 (3.4). The official CO_2 emissions are 105–90g/km. EU Directive and Regulation 692/2008 test environment figures. Fuel consumption and CO_2 may vary with driving styles, road conditions and other factors.

*Advance payment offers are only valid for Motability applications to 31 December 2014 and are correct at time of going to press. **Excludes i.d. paint for Renault Clio and Renault Scenic. Motability is a trademark of Motability. Registered charity number 299745.

Don't worry there's help to find right one

RESEARCH PAYS OFF: Motability's own website can help you decide whether the Toyota Auris Touring Sports (top), Renault Clio (below right) or Vauxhall Zafira Tourer (below left) is best for you

Motability more than 2,000 vehicles can seem daunting.

The scheme's website has a search function allowing users to quickly create a short list of comparable cars, taking account of buying parameters, mixing typical consumer searches and the specialist needs of Motability users.

Search by car details takes a consumer-style approach and includes:

- What kind of mobility allowance the user has.
- What level of advance payment the user intends to pay, if anything.
- Preferred car type, make, model and number of doors.
- Whether the user wants a manual, semi-automatic or automatic gearbox.
- Whether the driver is under-25.

But there are two other search programmes:

- Search by Accessibility Needs, taking account of car measurements.
- Search for a Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle (WAV).

There is also excellent advice on what type of car to look for, in language more relevant to disabled users, such as:

- How smaller two-to-three door cars generally have wider doors with larger opening angles that may make access easier, but may be both harder to close generally and harder to open wide in narrow parking spaces.
- How hatchbacks have a raise-up rear door or 'hatch', which could make it harder for a wheelchair user to open/close or access items, or simply be problematic when opening in the garage.
- Extra space in estate cars can be more convenient for a disabled person as the load area may be used to carry disability aids, but the vehicles can be longer and bulkier.

Lipscomb Cars Ltd
www.lipscomb.co.uk

Motability

FIAT 500L
1.3 M-JET 85 POP STAR DUALOGIC
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ALFA ROMEO MiTo
DISTINCTIVE TWINAIR 105BHP
£595 ADVANCE PAYMENT

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Lipscomb Volvo 01227 208516
Central House, Ashford Road, Chartham, Canterbury, Kent CT4 7HH

Lipscomb Fiat 01233 223079
Bridge House, Chart Road, Ashford, Kent TN23 3HZ

Vehicles are shown for illustration purposes only. These offers supersede all previously advertised offers. Prices correct at time of going to press. Offers are subject to availability. Licenced credit brokers, written details available on request, finance is subject to status. E&OE.

10826

Top tips on making your Motability choice

SMALL CARS:
Tend to have lower advance payments, running costs and CO2 emissions than larger vehicles. Two-to-three door cars generally have wider doors with larger opening angles, which makes access easier, but closing the door and fitting in narrow parking spaces may be harder. Four-to-five door cars benefit from superior back seat access – useful if you often have more than one passenger.

MEDIUM CARS:
Are often sold as hatchbacks and will have a slightly bigger boot than a standard small car. The same doors argument applies as for small cars.

FAMILY CARS:
Family cars are large four-door saloons or five-door hatchbacks and are considerably larger than medium sized cars. Hatchbacks usually have more boot capacity.

ESTATE CARS:
Usually longer than a standard saloon or hatchback, with useful space for mobility aids in the boot, but this can add to the car's bulk so make sure you check it out with a test drive before committing.

MULTI-PURPOSE VEHICLES (MPV):
Ranging from small to large, MPVs can seat up to nine people.

The seats are higher, with more headroom, legroom and width. Some have large sliding side doors, which obviously improve access for those with disabilities.

4X4 AND SPORT UTILITY VEHICLES (SUV):
The term '4x4' is usually used to describe vehicles designed for off-road use, which generally have higher ground clearance.

Until recently, all 4x4s had four-wheel drive, but many people now buy for the SUV styling and opt for a front-wheel drive only version to save fuel.

COUPES, ROADSTERS AND CABRIOLETS:
Coupes are small and sporty-looking, seating either two or four people, but may be compromised for disabled users due to their two-door format, low down and cramped seating and smaller boots.

WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE VEHICLES (WAVS):
WAVs are cars converted to carry passengers travelling in their wheelchair or those who wish to drive from a wheelchair. WAVs may be best if you have trouble getting in and out of the car from your wheelchair and would prefer to remain in it when travelling as a passenger.

WAVs come in different sizes and have many standard features. The Motability website has a specific WAV Search.

DIFFERENT APPROACHES: Honda's Civic Tourer (top) is a capacious yet stylish estate, while the Renault Scenic (above) is a smart yet practical MPV

NORTHGATE GARAGE (CANTERBURY) LTD NORTHGATE, CANTERBURY, KENT CT1 1FW.
TEL: 01227 829930 WWW.NORTHGATE-GROUP.CO.UK

*Available on selected models only. Terms and conditions apply. Images for illustration purposes only. 56807

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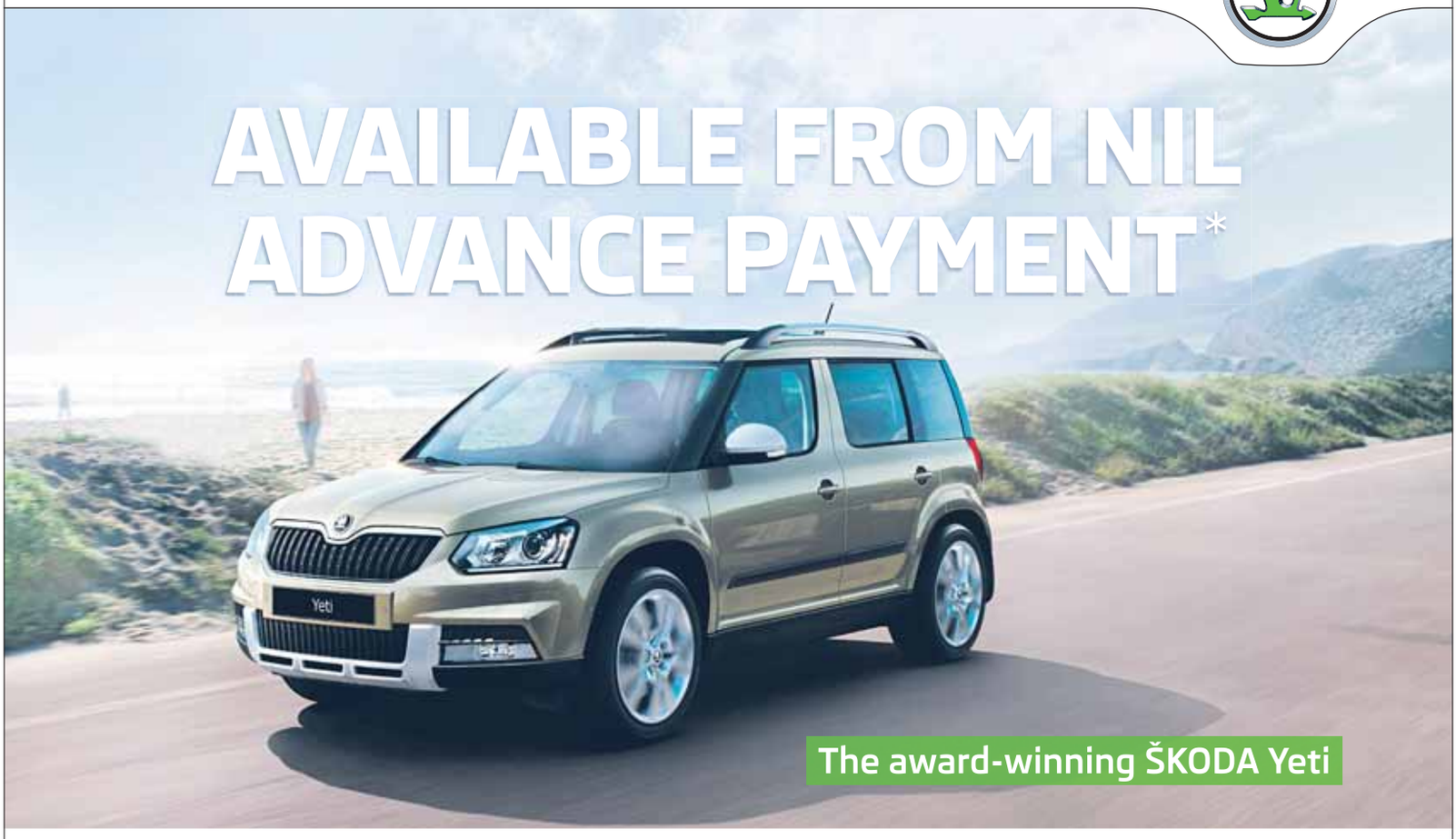

The new ŠKODA Yeti — available in three trim grades – S, SE and Elegance, with prices starting from just £16,600 OTR. The Yeti was named the most satisfying car to own by UK drivers in the annual Auto Express Driver Power customer satisfaction survey 2012 and 2013.

Auto Express DRIVER POWER

BEST CAR : ŠKODA YETI

Motability

Motorline ŠKODA Canterbury
Vauxhall Ind Est.
Westminster Road CT1 1YY
0843 658 2604
www.motorline.co.uk/skoda

Motorline ŠKODA Dartford
555 Princes Road, Dartford
Kent DA2 6HH
0843 658 2618
www.motorline.co.uk/skoda

Motorline ŠKODA Medway
26 Hoath Lane, Wigmore
Gillingham, Kent ME8 0SW
0843 658 9764
www.motorline.co.uk/skoda

*To qualify for this offer you must be in receipt of the Higher Rate Mobility Component of Disability Living Allowance, War Pensioners' Mobility Supplement, Personal Independence Payment (PIP) or Armed Forces Independence Payment (AFIP). Nil advance payment applies to Yeti S and Outdoor S 1.2 TSI 105 only. Yeti shown is Outdoor Elegance 1.2 TSI 105PS manual (from £795 advance payment) with optional metallic paint (£525) and part-silver roof rails (£160). Car shown may vary from UK specification. Prices and specifications are accurate at time of print. Offers may be varied or withdrawn at any time and are not available in conjunction with any other offer. Retail sales only. Participating retailers only. Subject to availability. Valid for applications to Motability from 1 October to 31 December 2014.

Official fuel consumption for the Yeti range in mpg (litres/100km): Urban 28.8 (9.8) to 54.3 (5.2); Extra Urban 42.8 (6.6) to 67.3 (4.2); Combined 36.2 (7.8) to 61.4 (4.6). CO_2 range emissions 184 to 119g/km. Standard EU test figures for comparative purposes and may not reflect real driving results.

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BRADSTOW SCHOOL

Bradstow is a creative and unique residential school for children between the ages of 5 & 19. It is situated in 13 acres of parkland just a few hundred metres from the sandy beaches of Broadstairs. We seek to meet the needs of children and young people with autism and severe learning difficulties with associated behaviours that may be challenging. We have achieved national recognition for our developments in Communication and Behaviour Management.

DEPUTY HEAD OF CARE

A Deputy Head of Care is required to lead and supervise the childcare provision of the registered children's home for the children and young people who currently attend Bradstow School. The successful candidate will have proven managerial and leadership skills, and a knowledge of supporting children and young people with learning disabilities, autism and associated challenging behaviours.

The Deputy Head of Care will be a member of the Senior Leadership Team and will contribute to the continuous improvement of the school and actively promote and model the vision, values and mission of the school community.

The successful candidate will have achieved QCF Level 5 (Diploma in Leadership for Health and Social Care and Children and Young People Services), or equivalent, or a willingness to successfully complete within 18 months of commencement of employment.

£34,894 - £37,578 pa (plus sleeping in allowance) – 41 hours per week.
Term Time Only, plus 2 weeks.

HOUSEPARENT - CHILDCARE

Working as part of the childcare team, this role involves providing care and support to students mornings, evenings and weekends being a student's Keyworker and some management responsibility.

£19,817- £22,443 pa - 41 hours per week (including split shifts and weekends)
– Term time only, plus 2 weeks*

LEARNING SUPPORT ASSISTANTS (TEAM SUPPORT WORKERS – EDUCATION)

The successful applicants will be responsible for assisting teachers in the school, for which previous experience is required:

£12,816 - £13,609 pa - 37½ hours per week, 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Mon-Fri
- Term time only, plus 2 weeks*

(INDIVIDUAL LEARNING SUPPORT ASSISTANTS)

The successful applicants will be responsible for assisting teachers in the school, no previous experience is required, full training will be provided:

£11,596 - £12,111 pa - 37½ hours per week, 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Mon-Fri
- Term time only, plus 2 weeks*

TEAM SUPPORT WORKERS – Residential Care

As part of the childcare team, these roles involve providing care and support to the children and young people in childcare teams mornings, evenings and weekends. These roles are aimed at candidates with some experience of Care work.

£14,013 - £14,880 plus 10% pa - 41 hours per week, (including weekends)
- Term time only, plus 2 weeks *

CHILDCARE SUPPORT ASSISTANTS

As part of the childcare teams, these roles involve providing care and support to the children and young people mornings, evenings and weekends. No experience required, full training will be given.

£11,286 - £11,784 plus 10% pa – 36.5 hours per week, (including weekends
– more hours available) - Term time only, plus 2 weeks*

FLEXIBANK TEAM SUPPORT WORKERS

To provide additional support a cover within either the classrooms or residences.
Flexi-bank - £7.26 per hour – **When required**
(up to 41 hours per week including split shifts and weekends)

COMMUNICATION FACILITATOR

To provide support to the Speech and Language Therapist and create, organise, deliver and monitor all Makaton signing training to staff.

£15,992 - £17,704 pa - 34 hours per week, Mon-Fri - Term time only, plus 2 weeks*

***For these roles there will also be up to a maximum of two weeks for the school's respite care provision if required, for which extra payment would be paid.**

For all posts we look for candidates who are mature, warm, creative and open to learning with a patient and caring attitude to deal sensitively with vulnerable children.

We are committed to sustainability and preserving the environment and therefore encourage applications by email, so for an application form and information pack please email personnel@bradstow.wandsworth.sch.uk.
Or you may call 01843 608727 (24 hour recruitment answer machine).

Please note that CVs will not be considered.

The closing date for all applications is 5pm, Thursday 4th December 2014.

Spencer PRIVATE HOSPITALS

Spencer Private Hospitals are two hospitals situated in East Kent. The larger of the two hospitals is a 22 bed independent hospital situated at the QEQM Hospital in Margate, whilst the second hospital is a 4 bed independent hospital based at the William Harvey Hospital in Ashford. Both hospitals have a reputation for providing excellent medical and surgical facilities supported by Specialist Consultants, Specialist Nurses and Physiotherapists. We have state of the art diagnostic equipment and exceptionally high standards of nursing care.

The continuing growth of our business has resulted in vacancy for the following staff:

SENIOR PHYSIOTHERAPIST - MARGATE

FULL TIME Hours: 37.5 per week Closing date: 05/12/2014
Salary: £32k - £35k
Qualifications and Experience:

- Diploma/Degree in Physiotherapy State Registration
- 3–5 years post graduate experience, including core rotations at junior level
- Experience of managing people
- Able to demonstrate a holistic approach to patient management
- Excellent interpersonal and communication skills
- Ability to work weekends

To discuss this opportunity, or to arrange an informal visit, please contact:
Adebayo Tijani, Physiotherapy Manager, on 0747 9987931

For a job description and application form please visit
www.spencerprivatehospitals.com/careers

Alternatively, please contact **Jo Wright, Senior HR Assistant**

Telephone: **01304 245961** E-mail: recruitment@spencerhospitals.com

Spencer Private Hospitals is an equal opportunity employer.
This position is subject to a Disclosure and Barring check.

INVESTORS IN PEOPLE

Spencer PRIVATE HOSPITALS

Spencer Private Hospitals are two hospitals situated in East Kent. The larger of the two hospitals is a 22 bed independent hospital situated at the QEQM Hospital in Margate, whilst the second hospital is a 4 bed independent hospital based at the William Harvey Hospital in Ashford. Both hospitals have a reputation for providing excellent medical and surgical facilities supported by Specialist Consultants, Specialist Nurses and Physiotherapists. We have state of the art diagnostic equipment and exceptionally high standards of nursing care.

The continuing growth of our business has resulted in vacancies for the following staff

MEDICAL SECRETARY - MARGATE

FULL TIME Hours: 37.5 Salary: £19552.50 per annum
Qualifications and Experience:

- **Maths and English GCSE A-C or equivalent**
- **Audio typing experience**
- **IT Skills**
- **2 years' experience working in a medical environment**

To discuss this opportunity, or to arrange an informal visit, please contact: Julie Pain, Administration Supervisor, on 01843 234558

PHYSIOTHERAPY ADMINISTRATOR - MARGATE

PART TIME Hours: 15 per week 1pm- 4pm Monday - Friday
Salary: £15,153.19 per annum (pro rata)
Qualifications and Experience:

- **Excellent communication and interpersonal skills**
- **RSA Stage 1 or 2 equivalent**
- **IT Skills**
- **2 – 3 years' administrative experience working in a medical environment**

To discuss this opportunity, or to arrange an informal visit, please contact: Adebayo Tijani, Physiotherapy Manager, on 0747 9987931

CLOSING DATE FOR ALL THE ABOVE POSITIONS - 12/12/2014

For a job description and application form please visit www.spencerprivatehospitals.com/careers
Alternatively, please contact Jo Wright, Senior HR Assistant. Telephone: 01304 245961
E-mail: recruitment@spencerhospitals.com

Spencer Private Hospital is an equal opportunity employer.
This position is subject to a Disclosure and Barring check.

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Thamesview SCHOOL

Behaviour Support Assistant

32.5 hours per week for 39 weeks per year
Kent Salary Range 5
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Pro rata to £12,825.00 - £14,106.00 pa

We are seeking to appoint an experienced and dedicated member of support staff to work alongside the Assistant Headteacher responsible for Behaviour Management and provide key administrative, welfare and progress development support for students.

The ideal applicant will…

- relate well to students, have strong interpersonal skills and demonstrate a high level of emotional intelligence to communicate effectively in sometimes challenging situations;
- be able to liaise and communicate effectively with outside agencies, staff and students;
- be confident to work independently and multi task in a range of areas;
- have good attendance and punctuality record;
- be experienced in monitoring progress using data effectively and implementing creative strategies to ensure achievement of identified SMEH students;
- be a positive role model supporting students with SMEH issues;
- be highly organised and able to manage their time well, when juggling a range of tasks;
- have a cheerful disposition, show confidence and contribute ideas to work within a team;
- demonstrate effective examples of initiatives they have developed in a school to date.

The School has recently had a very positive Ofsted inspection, demonstrating progression on our journey towards becoming an 'outstanding' school. Thamesview is a new school build that benefits from innovative learning environments and state of the art ICT equipment. We are committed to providing high quality learning experiences for our students and to supporting our staff through excellent CPD opportunities.

Further details and an application form can be obtained from our HR Manager on 01474 566552 ext 1120 or email: **k.mcgowan@thamesview.kent.sch.uk**

Closing Date: **9th December 2014, 9.00am**
Interviews: **Week Commencing 15th December 2014**

CVs without an application form will not be accepted.

We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of students.
Appointment to this post will require an Enhanced Disclosure via the Criminal Records Bureau.
Thamesview School operates a non-smoking policy

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Applications close on:
9th December 2014

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The Duke of York's Royal Military School

Pastoral Leader Term Time Only

Due to the expansion of our boarding provision, we require a full-time Pastoral Leader for a girls' boarding house on a term time only basis. The role is an exciting opportunity to support young people in both their academic and social life. You will work a term time only shift rota plus a few days, supporting students from early morning to late evening over 7 days. A comprehensive training programme will be available to the successful candidates. The role would be particularly appropriate to teaching assistants, cover supervisors, support workers or anyone who has a genuine interest in working with students and who wishes to embark on a new and exciting career in a unique and iconic setting. A package of benefits includes free meals whilst on duty, use of pool and gym on site. Hours: 41.33 a week. Salary: £13,291 **Closing date: midday Thursday 4 December, Interviews: PM Wednesday 10 December.** *An application form and further details can be located on the School's website www.doyrms.com, alternatively email reception@doyrms.com or ring 01304 245023.*

The School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Candidates must be willing to undergo child protection screening appropriate to the post including checks with past employers and via the Disclosure and Barring Service.

Spencer PRIVATE HOSPITALS

Spencer Private Hospitals are two hospitals situated in East Kent. The larger of the two hospitals is a 22 bed independent hospital situated at the QEQM Hospital in Margate, whilst the second hospital is a 4 bed independent hospital based at the William Harvey Hospital in Ashford. Both hospitals have a reputation for providing excellent medical and surgical facilities supported by Specialist Consultants, Specialist Nurses and Physiotherapists. We have state of the art diagnostic equipment and exceptionally high standards of nursing care.

The continuing growth of our business has resulted in vacancies for the following staff

Staff Nurse - Ward – Margate

Full Time - Hours: 37.5 - Salary: Dependent on qualifications and experience

- **Registered Nurse 1st level**
- **Evidence of continual professional development**
- **Experience in a surgical/medical environment with a knowledge and understanding of surgical/medical procedures**
- **Excellent communication and interpersonal skills**

To discuss this opportunity, or to arrange an informal visit, please contact: Mary Guarnieri, Ward Manager on 01843 234249

CLOSING DATE FOR ALL THE ABOVE POSITIONS - 12/12/2014

For a job description and application form please visit www.spencerprivatehospitals.com/careers

Alternatively, please contact Jo Wright, Senior HR Assistant.
Telephone: 01304 245961
E-mail: recruitment@spencerhospitals.com

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This position is subject to a Disclosure and Barring check.

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LEGAL AND PUBLIC NOTICES

NOTICE OF INTENDED LAND DISPOSAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 SECTION 123 (2A)

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that Tunbridge Wells Borough Council intends to dispose of the freehold interest in six areas of land, which are for identification purposes described in the schedule to this notice.

This notice is given in so far as the areas of land consist of or form part of an open space within the meaning of the above Section.

A plan of each piece of land is available to view at the Gateway, 8 Grosvenor Road, Royal Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN1 2AB or at the Weald Information Centre, The Old Fire Station, Stone Street, Cranbrook TN17 3HF.

Objections to the proposed disposals must be made in writing to the Legal Services Manager, Town Hall, Royal Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN1 1RS by no later than Friday 12th December 2014.

SCHEDULE

Land to the rear 40-46 Charles Street, Tunbridge Wells, Kent (approximately 0.010 hectares)

Land at Aspen Way, Tunbridge Wells, Kent (approximately 0.001 hectares)

Land on the South Side of Redwings Lane, Pembury, Tunbridge Wells, Kent (approximately 0.026 hectares)

Garages at the Goldings on the North Side of Badsell Road, Paddock Wood, Kent (approximately 0.002 hectares)

Land at Rear of 67 - 73 Goods Station Road, Tunbridge Wells (approximately 0.031 hectares)

Land on the South East Side of North Farm Road, Southborough, Tunbridge Wells, Kent (approximately 0.013 hectares)

John Scarborough, Head of Legal Services

Dated 14 November 2014

AUCTION SALE
16th December 2014
barnard marcus

By order of Tunbridge Wells Borough Council

- **Pair of garages at Goldings, TN12 6EQ** (Guide* £8,000+)
- **Parking space at Aspen Way, TN4 9YB** (Guide* £1,000+)
- **Land r/o 40-46 Charles St, TN4 0DS** (Guide* £5,000+)
- **Reversionary land r/o 67-73 Goods Station Rd, TN1 2DF** (Guide* £5,000+)
- **Access road to Godfreys Yard, TN2 3DH** (Guide* £2,000+)
- **Land at Cockshoot Cottages, Redwings Ln TN2 4AR** (Guide* £5,000+)

Upon instructions of Canterbury City Council
Faversham Road, Whitstable, CT5 4BL
Freehold beachside building (former public conveniences)
Guide* £20,000+

Please call 0208 741 8088
www.barnardmarcusauctions.co.uk

*Guide Prices must not be relied upon by prospective purchasers as a valuation or assessment of value of the property. It is intended to provide purchasers with an indication of the region at which the reserve may be set at the time of going to press. The guide price may be subject to variation and interested parties are advised to make regular checks for variations and should be aware that the reserve price may be either below or above the quoted guide price.

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PLANNING

Folkestone Hythe & Romney Marsh
Shepway District Council

THE TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE) (ENGLAND) ORDER 2010

The following applications have been submitted for consideration by the Council:

Y14/1225/SH - 151 Sandgate Road Folkestone Kent CT20 2DA. Listed building consent for works in connection with the conversion of the existing building to provide 4 No. Self-contained flats with a small extension to front, changes to windows in front and rear elevations and internal alterations.

Y14/1224/SH - 151 Sandgate Road Folkestone Kent CT20 2DA - Change of use and conversion of existing building to provide 4 No. self-contained flats with small extension to front, changes to windows in front and rear elevations and internal alterations.

Y14/1181/SH - 10 Sun Lane Hythe Kent CT21 5JX - Erection of new fencing and gate upon eastern boundary following removal of existing picket fence.

Y14/0873/SH - Land Adjacent The Surgery Main Road Sellindge Kent - Hybrid application for the redevelopment of land between the A20 and M20 at Sellindge. Application for Outline permission (with all matters reserved except access) comprising of 200 dwellings, local mixed use centre containing parish offices (sui generis up to 100m2), and associated storage (sui generis up to 100m2, 40m2 as closed storage and 60m2 as secure outdoor storage) commercial floorspace (A1/A3/A5 uses up to 200m2) together with access form the A20, associated roads, parking, earthworks, open space including attenuation features and landscaping. Full application comprising 50 dwellings, village green and play equipment, access from the A20, associated roads, community car parking, earthworks, open space including attenuation features and landscaping.

Y14/1291/SH+ - 47 High Street Hythe Kent CT21 5AF - Installation of an ATM, following removal of existing ATM.

Y14/1223/SH+ - Oak Hall Bartholomew Street Hythe Kent CT21 5BT - Listed Building Consent for the demolition of single storey rear additions, installation of 2no. French doors to rear (North) elevation, enlargement of 3no. existing windows to side (West) elevation and creation of 1no. new window to West elevation.

Y14/1251/SH - 20 Church Street Folkestone Kent CT20 1SE - Listed Building Consent for removal of partition wall to 1st floor; erection of security camera and plaque to front elevation.

Y14/0300/SH - A major application for planning permission which is accompanied by an Environmental Statement which affects the setting of listed buildings and public rights of way.

Shorncliffe Garrison Folkestone Kent - Hybrid application for the redevelopment of land at Shorncliffe Garrison. Application for outline permission (with all matters reserved) for demolition of existing buildings (with the exception of the listed buildings and water tower) and erection of up to 906 dwellings including affordable housing, community services and facilities (use Classes A1/A3/B1a/D1 and D2 uses up to 1,998 sqm), new Primary school and nursery (up to 3,500 sqm), combined new pavilion/cadet hut facility (up to 600 sqm) at The Stadium, retained cricket pitches including mini football pitches, equipped play, associated public open space and toilets, together with, associated accesses/roads, parking, associated services, infrastructure, landscaping, attenuation features and earthworks.

Full application comprising demolition of existing buildings and erection of 294 dwellings including affordable housing, open space, improvements to 'The Stadium' sports facilities and new car park, equipped play improvements/works to The Backdoor Training Area, associated accesses/roads, parking, associated services, infrastructure, landscaping, attenuation features and earthworks.

Representations can be made in writing either on line on the Council's website, by email to planning@shepway.gov.uk or in writing to the Head of Planning and Environmental Health, Shepway District Council, Civic Centre, Castle Hill Avenue, Folkestone, Kent, CT20 2QY. Please always quote the application reference number. Comments should be made in writing within 21 days from the date of publication. Please note that any representations received will be publically viewable on the Council's website.

Some applications can be viewed at other locations in addition to the Civic Centre, Folkestone. The applications are marked as follows:

- The One Stop Shop, Magpies, Church Approach, New Romney

\+ - Hythe Town Council Offices, Stade Street, Hythe

The applications marked (*) do not accord with the provisions of the development plan in force in the area in which the land to which the application relates is situated.

Note: This is not a full list of applications received. All planning applications can be viewed and comments made online at http://searchplanapps.shepway.gov.uk/online-applications/.

C Lewis, Head of Planning and Environmental Health
Shepway District Council

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Stones ready for second round tie

Maidstone United's players up for Wrexham Dragons clash

MAIDSTONE: Looking to repeat their Stevenage giant-killing

Pictures: THE FA VIA GETTY IMAGES

Football

By Jamie Weir
jamie.weir@archant.co.uk

MAIDSTONE United are set to clash with Wrexham Dragons in the FA Cup second round next Saturday (December 6).

The Ryman Football League team earned the tie after striker Fannie Collin slotted away a brace of goals in Maidstone's 2-0 giant-killing of Stevenage.

And the Stones will be looking to repeat their last David vs Goliath performance, with the Dragons two tiers above Maidstone in the league pyramid.

Despite this, the Stones will be going in to the match full of confidence after their win against Stevenage, and more recently their 6-0 demolition of Herne Bay.

That performance saw them move into the third round of the League Cup.

Wrexham, meanwhile, have lost two of their last three games, setting the Dragons up for a potential fall when the two teams meet.

And one thing which has bolstered the Stones this week is Jay May's successful appeal against his three game ban.

May was given the ban after being sent off for allegedly elbowing during the Stones FA Trophy defeat by Sudbury on November 15.

But the FA upheld the striker's appeal with the regulatory commission ruling to overturn the match ban.

That frees May to play in the VCD Athletic, Wrexham and Leatherhead games.

Stones boss Jay Saunders was relieved to find out that May would be allowed to play.

He said: "Obviously it's a massive bonus for us finding out we'll have Jay May available to play."

The second round draw will, like the game against Stevenage, be played in front of the cameras. The match will be televised live on BBC Wales. Kick off will be at 5.30pm.

Dover Athletic will also be continuing their FA Cup campaign next weekend.

The Whites will take on Cheltenham at the Whaddon Road stadium in their second round tie.

This year is the second Dover have reached the second round, with the team hopeful they can continue their journey in the competition.

The game will kick off at 2pm on Sunday, December 7.

Kent cricket club announces 2015 fixtures

KENT cricket club have released the fixtures list for the 2015 season.

The fixtures show that the club is set to make a return to its recently redeveloped Beckenham ground, with two NatWest T20 Blast night matches set to be played there.

The fixtures schedule will feature 54 days of cricket in Kent including a unique Australian double-header at Canterbury's Spitfire Ground.

The Aussies will play their first Ashes tour fixture on June 25-28.

The ground will also welcome the Australian women's team, with Canterbury's first Test Match with England v Australia on August 11-14.

Kent cricket CEO Jamie Clifford said: "2015 is shaping up to be a landmark year for Kent cricket.

"The fixture programme has a good range of matches.

BECKENHAM: Set to see matches after redevelopment

"Hosting the opening game of the men's Ashes tour and our first ever Test Match as England play Australia in the only Women's Ashes Test in an extended Canterbury Week is a huge honour for the Club.

"The new facilities at Beckenham will not only help the club bring through new talent, but also host top-class games in metropolitan Kent.

"Supporters who live and work in London, north and west Kent will have more cricket on their doorstep with a new 2,000-seater stand at Beckenham providing great views of the action and improved hospitality facilities.

"We will be back at Tunbridge Wells and Canterbury Cricket Week returns to its traditional format with the LV= Championship game on weekdays and weekend daytime Royal London One-Day Cup games."

Sport Shorts

» Email **sports@kosmedia.co.uk** or call **Jamie Weir** on **01233 653481**

Gillingham FC sees centre-back swap

GILLS manager Peter Taylor made a clean swap this week as centre-back Callum Davies left Priestfield on loan and 19-year-old Harry Lennon joined the club.

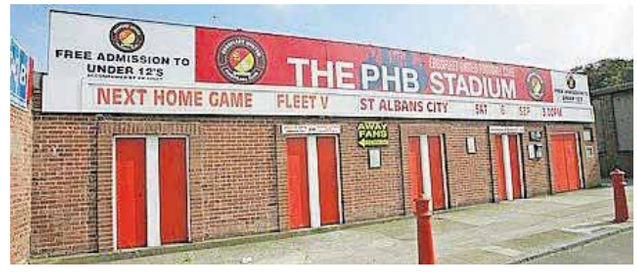
Taylor signed Lennon from Championship side, Charlton Athletic, on a youth loan. The Gills will keep the talented centre-back until January 3.

The Gills manager had to move quickly to replace Callum Davies after it was announced that he was joining Dover Athletic on loan until the new year, with Taylor signing the deal with Lennon in time for him to play at yesterday's home fixture against Port Vale.

Davies has experience of playing with the Whites, having helped them to gain promotion while on loan at the Crabble last season.

He returned to the Gills this summer, taking to the field eight times so far this season – twice captaining the team during Johnstone Paint Trophy games against Stevenage and Colchester.

TAYLOR: Worked fast to get new centre-back signing



EBBSFLEET: Manager Steve Brown was sacked after a bruising 3-0 defeat

Week of high drama for Ebbsfleet United

IT has been a week of high drama for Ebbsfleet United with the club seeing the departure of manager Steve Brown, before a new caretaker manager was installed.

The news of Brown's sacking came after the team's battering in a 3-0 loss at home against Gosport.

Brown first joined the club in June 2013, taking over from Liam Daish, but he lasted just 18 months, with the Fleet's chairman Dr Abdullah Al-Humaidi saying that the team needed a 'change of direction'.

Ebbsfleet, who currently sit fourth in the Vanarama Conference South, then announced that skipper Daryl McMahon would take over as a caretaker manager for the immediate future.

McMahon is currently Fleet's youth academy manager. The club has announced that it is keen to keep moving forward as smoothly as possible. Its board of directors have stated that they are currently considering all options for the vacant managerial position.

Kent mourns Aussie batsman

THE world of cricket was shaken this week, with the tragic death of Australian Test batsman Phil Hughes.

Kent cricket club joined the mourning for the 25-year-old who died when he was struck by a bouncer during a domestic match.

The cricketer never regained consciousness after being hit, tragically passing away on Thursday morning.

Club CEO Jamie Clifford said: "We are greatly saddened by the tragic news of Phil Hughes' death. All our thoughts are with Phil's family.

"Kent County Cricket Club sends deep condolences to Phil Hughes' family, friends and teammates."

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